

# *Parables to Ponder*

*for Children*

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SERIES: 3

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## **BEING MY BEST FRIEND**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** This parable teaches that to have a friend you must be a friend. The place to start is with you. You have to like yourself if you want others to like you. Jesus teaches us that the answers are within us. By going in and getting to know yourself, the good and the bad parts, you can become your own best friend. This going in and getting to know yourself takes practice. Start watching yourself and your reactions to yourself. When you notice that you are having negative thoughts about yourself STOP, go within and deliberately start telling yourself what you like about yourself. With practice you will develop a positive attitude about who you are and you will bring that positive you into all your encounters. You will discover that people will like being with you and being your friend.

- A) Be your own best friend
- B) Get to know yourself, the good and bad parts
- C) Create a positive image of yourself within yourself
- D) Unity youth principle #2 states, “I am naturally good because God’s Divinity is in me and everyone

**BIBLE VERSE:** Psalms 139:14 “I will praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

## BEING MY BEST FRIEND



Freddie was out on the front porch with his Grandpa one evening recently. Grandpa was in his favorite rocker puffing happily on his pipe. Freddie was sitting on the top step, head in hands, looking glum.

“Why so glum?” Grandpa asked.

“Why don’t I have any friends?” Freddie asked back.

“To have a friend you must be a friend. The first person you need to befriend is yourself. Do you like yourself? Would you consider yourself your best friend?” Grandpa replied.

Freddie quickly shot back, “Heck no! I think I’m a real dork. I’m not good at anything in particular. I’m not very smart; I am small for my age; I’m not athletic and the girls don’t seem to like me enough to let me be their boyfriend. Who would *like me*?”

“Well you seem to have answered your own question as to why you have no friends,” Grandpa responded.

There was a long pause and then Freddie quietly asked, “Yeah I guess you are right. What do I do about it?”

“Learn to like yourself and become your best friend,” Grandpa answered.

Freddie asked, “How do I do that?”

Grandpa took his pipe out of his mouth and leaned forward in his rocker to look Freddie straight in the eye. “Well, tell me about yourself again, only this time tell me the good things, things like accomplishments, what you like to do, stuff like that.”

Freddie thought for a minute and then smiled at Grandpa. “I love the outdoors nothing makes me happier then when Dad and I go out walking in the woods together and he tells me all about the wild life there.”

“Good, now tell me more about what you like about your life.” Grandpa encouraged.

Freddie thought a little while longer and replied. “We have a debate club at school and I am a member, and I really like to debate different topics with the other members. I love being out here on the farm with you and being around the animals. I love animals and would like to do something with them when I am older and am working. I started to learn how to play the guitar a few months ago and I am totally enjoying that.

There is a group of kids I know who like to get together and play. I could ask them if I could join in.”

Grandpa just smiled and said, “Well now look at all those nice things you know about yourself. Wouldn’t you like to have you for a friend?”

Freddie looked sheepishly at his grandpa and said, “Well I guess so. I guess I do have some good things about me after all.”

“Now befriend that person that you like and then be that person around others. I bet you that in no time you will have lots of friends. Are you willing to give it a try?”

Grandpa patted Freddie on the back.

Freddie’s face lit up as he spoke, “Why not, I feel better already.”

“Good and in a month’s, time come tell me about your new friends,” Grandpa answered back as he once again settled back in his rocker and puffed on his pipe.

### **DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Where was Freddie?
- 2) Who was he with?
- 3) Why was Freddie glum?
- 4) What did Grandpa ask Freddie about himself?
- 5) Why didn’t Freddie like himself?
- 6) Do you like yourself?
- 7) If not, why don’t you like yourself?
- 8) If so, why do you like yourself?
- 9) What did Grandpa tell Freddie would happen to him if he liked himself?
- 10) What guidance did Grandpa teach Freddie so he would learn to like himself?

11) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Jesus teaches us to go within for our answers to our questions. Go within now and ask yourself what are some good things you like about yourself.

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #2 states, "I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and everyone." What are some good things you know about yourself?

**(Reread Being My Best Friend)**

- 12) How do you wish you were different from the way that you are?
- 13) Can you love yourself the way you are and lovingly change negative attitudes that you have into positive ones?
- 14) Do you have the patience to do this change?
- 15) Do you respect the uniqueness that is you?
- 16) Can you forgive yourself for what you consider negative qualities about yourself?
- 17) Can you turn these negative opinions into positive ones?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and find something you like about yourself; some accomplishment you have achieved. Does that make you feel good about yourself? Does it make you feel friendly towards yourself?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their accomplishment and how it made them feel?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Go within and using your Christ eyes see a part of yourself you don't like. Now see a part of yourself you do like. Which part of you makes you a person you would like to have as a friend? Why?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share what they have experienced?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I like myself

I am my own best friend

I am a good friend to others

I respect my uniqueness

I respect other people's uniqueness

I am forgiving of myself and others

I am patient with myself and others.

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: Paper, crayons, colored pencils

Give each child some drawing supplies. Then ask them to draw a picture of their best friend, either human, or animal, or plant, or toy. After the drawings are finished have

each child stand up and show their drawing to the class and tell who their best friend is and why.

Activity 2:

Gather in a circle. As a group ask the children to pretend, they are Freddie and feeling glum about themselves. Then one by one ask each child why they are glum. After each child has a turn, ask them to sit and start to think about what they like about themselves and one by one tell the class what those things are. When all have shared ask them who they like the most their glum self or their happy self. Help them to see how by focusing on their happy self they like themselves and can become their own best friend.

### **Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, pens, pencils

Give each child paper and a pen or pencil. Take a few deep breathes till they are quiet. Then ask them to go within and see themselves with their Christ eyes. Ask them to ask themselves while in this quiet, reflective state what are some qualities about themselves that they like. Have them write those qualities down on their sheet of paper. Tell them to keep this sheet of paper and to refer back to it when they are feeling bad about themselves to remind them of what they like about themselves. Also encourage each child to ask their best friend to make a list of qualities about them that they like and give it to them. Have them refer to their friend's list to remind them that they are appreciated by others.

Activity 2:

Gather in a circle. One by one have each child describe their best friend and what they like about them. Then ask the child if they see those same qualities in themselves. If not ask them how they could develop them within themselves so they can also be their own best friend.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God help me to love myself just the way I am. Help me to be my own best friend as I live my life. I am one of Your children so I am perfect just the way I am. Thank you for creating me and thank you for my life. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## CARING

**LEARNING INTENTION:** Helping someone else have a happy day is the lesson in this parable. Helping someone else have a good day helps you have a good day also. When we follow Jesus' example of showing loving kindness to all everybody wins. When we show loving kindness to others, we bring joy into our interactions with others. Life is meant to be enjoyed and it is up to each one of us to bring joy to ourselves and to others.

- A) We are to show loving kindness to all
- B) Sharing joy with someone else brings you joy also
- C) Unity youth principle #5 states, "I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference."

**BIBLE VERSE:** Ephesians 4:32 "and be kind to one another, tender hearted and forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgives you"

## CARING



Melinda and her sister Harriet resided next door to an elderly gentleman who lived alone. The two of them called him Grandpa Evans. He was always kind to them. He loved to walk with them through his garden showing them the beautiful roses that he was so proud of.

Melinda and Harriet were visiting Grandpa Evans one Saturday afternoon, when all of a sudden Melinda blurted out “How old are you Grandpa Evans?”

“Why funny you should ask that of me today of all days,” he replied. “It just so happens that it will be my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday tomorrow.”

“Wow that is great. Do you have any plans to celebrate your birthday?” Harriet asked.

“At my age you don’t celebrate birthdays anymore,” Grandpa Evans answered with a sad smile.

Later, back at home the two sisters came up with a plan to celebrate Grandpa Evans birthday the next day. They went to their mother and told her about Grandpa Evans’ birthday and their plans to help him celebrate it. Their mother was delighted with their plan and the loving kindness of her daughters. The next day the three of them baked a beautiful birthday cake for him placing some candles on it. Then Melinda went out into their garden and picked a bouquet of flowers, putting them in a vase. When all was ready, they headed next door with the cake and the flowers. They knocked on the front door and soon Grandpa Evans opened the door.

“Happy Birthday,” they shouted to him. Grandpa Evans smiled from ear to ear and showed them into the dining room. They put the cake and flowers on the table. Then Harriet went into the kitchen and got some forks, plates and napkins. They lit the birthday

candles and sang Happy Birthday to Grandpa Evans. Next, they told him to make a wish and blow out all the candles. After blowing out the candles Grandpa Evans looked at his three friends as tears of joy streamed down his cheeks.

“This is the best birthday I have ever had,” he exclaimed. “Let’s cut the cake and be merry all day.”

**DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Who did Melinda and Harriet live next door to?
- 2) Why was the next day special to Grandpa Evans?
- 3) How old would he be that day?
- 4) Do you know anybody 80 years old?
- 5) What did Melinda and Harriet do with their Mother to help Grandpa Evans celebrate his birthday?
- 6) What was Grandpa Evans reaction to what they did?
- 7) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Think about Jesus’ teaching to seek good for everyone and ask yourself what you could do to make someone happy today.

**OLDER CHILDREN:**

Unity youth principle # 5 states, “I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference.” Think of a way you could make a happy difference in someone’s life today.

**(Reread Caring)**

- 8) How do you show kindness to others?
- 9) How do you show consideration to others?

10) What act of kindness have you received recently?

11) Whom in your life do you respect and why?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and get still and think of someone you would like to make happy. How would you do it?

(PAUSE)

Who would like to share how they would make someone else happy?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Go within and remember a time you let an opportunity to show loving kindness to someone else slip by without doing anything. Now imagine the same situation and this time you do show loving kindness. Notice the difference that makes to both yourself and the other person.

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their experience?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I am a caring person

I am compassionate

I am considerate

I show friendliness to others

I am kind

I am love

I respect others

I bring joy to the people around me

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: colored paper, crayons, colored pencils

Give each child a sheet of colored paper. Have them fold the paper in half so they have a card. Then give out the colored pencils and crayons and have them create a card to give to someone special in their lives, such as a parent, brother, sister, teacher, grandparent, or friend. Let them decorate the card as they want and to somewhere put the message "I love you". Have the children take their cards home with them and give it to their special person.

Activity 2:

Gather in a circle and do some deep breathing in and out for several times to get the children quiet and centered. When everyone is quiet have each child sit quietly with themselves and ask how they like to be surprised in a happy way. Then let the children share what that surprise would be.

**Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, pencils

Pair the children up in twos. Give each pair the assignment to think of a situation either in their personal lives, their community or the world that needs positive attention. Then challenge them to come up with a way to show that positive attention. Have them

write it down on the paper provided. When everyone is done let each pair share their situation and the positive attention, they would apply to it.

Activity 2:

Sit together and have a discussion about some event coming up at church and how their youth group could participate. It could be a holiday, a work project, a volunteer fair, pot luck, or anything coming up that is a church wide effort. Develop a plan of action that the group could present to the congregation that would have a positive impact on the event. Then present that plan to the congregation.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, thank You for the enjoyment we can experience with ourselves and that we can bring to one another. Help us to always be considerate and kind to one another sharing Your love. Through sharing Your love, we will experience Your peace both within ourselves and all we interact with. Amen.

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## CAUGHT IN A LIE

**LEARNING INTENTION:** In this parable lesson the value of telling the truth is presented. Telling lies never works, but always doing your best and being honest in your words and actions with yourself and others does work. As Jesus taught, we reap what we sow. To sow a life that goes in a positive direction you give yourself the ability to reap a positive harvest. This happens when what you sow by your actions and words has integrity. Integrity means being honest and sincere. No matter what the circumstances, by telling the truth the outcome will be for the best. It is very important to also be honest and sincere with yourself. If you do tell a lie, admit it, correct it, and move forward having learned from your mistake.

- A) Don't get caught in a lie
- B) Sow actions and words that are honest and sincere and reap a good harvest
- C) Unity youth principle #5 states, "I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference."

**BIBLE VERSE:** Colossians 3:9 "Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man who is received in knowledge according to the image of him who created him."

## CAUGHT IN A LIE



Tommy came into the house after baseball practice feeling hot and looking dirty. His big brother, Jon was sitting in the kitchen having a glass of ice tea. Tommy went into the kitchen, opened the ice box door, got out the pitcher of ice tea, and poured a glass of tea. He sat down at the table with Jon.

“So how was baseball practice?” Jon asked. “From the looks of you I’d say you got to play a lot.”

Desperately wanting to impress his big brother, Tommy told him a lie. “We had a great time. I even hit a home run and slid into home plate. That is why I am so dirty.”

“That’s fantastic,” Jon exclaimed. “Were there any other players on the bases when you hit your home run?”

“No, just me,” Tommy replied.

Later that afternoon Tommy's friend and fellow baseball team member stopped by. When Jon saw Peter, he asked him if he had been at practice earlier today.

"Yeah I was at practice why?" Peter asked.

"Well you must have seen Tommy hit his home run," Jon said.

"Tommy didn't hit any home runs at practice today," Peter shot back. "Did Tommy tell you that?"

Both Jon and Peter turned and looked at Tommy whose face was now beet red.

"Why did you lie to me Tommy?" Jon asked.

"I just wanted to impress you, that's all," Tommy replied meekly.

"Do you think catching you in a lie impresses me? Don't ever lie Tommy. You always get caught one way or another. And besides you don't have to impress me, I think you are a great little brother just the way you are," Jon explained.

### **DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Where had Tommy been before he got home?
- 2) Who was already home?
- 3) What lie did Tommy tell Jon?
- 4) Why did Tommy lie to Jon?
- 5) Who stopped by later in the afternoon?
- 6) What did Jon find out from Peter?
- 7) What did Jon ask Tommy in regards to what Peter had told him?
- 8) What did Tommy tell Jon about trying to impress him?
- 9) What does the parable tell you about honesty?
- 10) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Jesus teaches us that we reap what we sow. Are you honest with others?

Are you honest with yourself?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #5 states, "I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference." Think of a time you made a positive difference in your life by telling the truth.

**(Reread Caught in a Lie)**

11) Have you ever been caught in a lie?

12) Were you able to admit it and move on?

13) Have you ever caught someone else in a lie and confronted them about it?

14) Were you able to forgive them so both of you could move on?

15) Are you willing to take responsibility for your words and actions so you can create positive experiences for yourself?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of a time you were courageous and told the truth when it would have been easier to lie. How did you feel afterwards?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their experience and how it made them feel?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Go within and remember a time you lied about something. What happened? What did you reap from what you had sown? Now go back to that same situation and tell the truth instead. Do you get a different result?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share the experience they had and the difference they experienced when they went back to the situation and told the truth?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I am honest with my words and actions

I am respectful

I tell the truth

I take responsibility for my words and actions

I honor the Truth in all situations

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Pair the children up and have one child make up a lie about something and tell the other child the lie. Then have the same child tell the truth about the situation they lied about. Then reverse the rolls and repeat the lesson. After this exercise is done sit in a circle and discuss how it felt to tell a lie to someone and how it felt to tell the truth. Ask the class which felt better, telling a lie or telling the truth.

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper, colored pencils and crayons

Give each child two pieces of paper. On one sheet have them draw a picture of what it feels like to lie. On the other sheet have them draw a picture of what it feels like to tell the truth. Post the pictures in two groups ~ group 1 the lies and group 2 the truth.

Let the children view the pictures and lead them in a discussion of how each group feels and which feels better ~ lying or telling the truth.

**Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Have the class take a few deep breaths and go within and imagine they are telling a lie to someone important in their lives like their parent or a teacher. Then have them imagine the same situation only this time they tell the truth. Ask which makes them feel the best. Then lead a discussion about the feelings one has when lying and when telling the truth.

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper and pencils. On each sheet of paper have the Unity youth principle #5 printed on the top. "I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference."

Have an open discussion with the children about what this Unity youth principle means to them. Then have them sit quietly and write down what the principle means to them individually and how they can apply it in their daily lives. Ask them to be honest and sincere with themselves about their answers. Explain to them that by getting to know themselves in this positive way they can build lives of integrity.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, help me to be an honest and sincere person. Give me the strength to always tell the truth to both myself and others. I want to plant positive seeds through my actions and my words so I can reap a positive harvest. Thank you. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## **FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** This parable is about the power of a dream held in your mind until it comes true. Believing in yourself and your right to have something that you want helps you to make a dream come true. Be careful what you wish for; be sure it is for your good and everyone else, because dreams do come true. There are a lot of good lessons along the way for you as you wait for your dream to come true. You will learn about faith and trust. You will learn that having a positive attitude brings forth positive results. Life is as good as you imagine it to be.

- A) Believe in your dreams
- B) Be faithful to them until they manifest
- C) Unity youth principle #4 states, “Through affirmative prayer and meditation I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.”

**BIBLE VERSE:** Hebrews 11:1 “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.”

## FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS



Alice was 7 years old when she had a dream of having her very own two-wheel bicycle. She even knew she wanted it to be *fire engine red* with a basket up front strapped to the handlebars but there was one large problem in the way for Alice to have her dream come true. Her family was poor and did not have any extra money for fancy *fire engine red* bicycles. But Alice was a spirited little girl with a positive attitude about such things as dreams. Every night before Alice went to sleep, she would see that beautiful bike in her mind and would fall off to sleep saying, “someday...someday.”

One day in December it was announced in class that there would be a school Christmas party the last day of classes before the holidays. To make the party extra special that year every child was asked to submit a request for a present. One lucky

student would have their name drawn and be given what they had requested. Alice had no problem writing down her request for a *fire engine red* bicycle.

The day of the Christmas party finally came. There were lots of wonderful treats to be eaten to celebrate the coming holidays. Alice's Mother came to join in with Alice at the festivities. Finally, the time for the drawing of the prize arrived. Everyone grew silent as the principal of the school reached into the box containing all the requests. Slowly he lifted one piece of paper out of the box as everyone held their breath and then the principal smiled and said loudly, "Will Alice please step forward and claim your *fire engine red* bicycle."

Alice stood by her Mother amazed at what she had just heard. She looked up at her and saw tears of joy were running down her cheeks. "Oh Alice, you have won. Now you have your dream for that *fire engine red* bicycle. I am so happy for you. Go now and claim your prize"

Alice proudly walked to the principal. "Well Alice congratulations. Is there anything you would like to say?" the principal asked.

"Yes, thank you very much you have made my dream come true." Alice replied.

### **DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What did Alice dream about owning?
- 2) What was the color of the bike that Alice wanted?
- 3) What was an obstacle that stood in the way of Alice having her dream?
- 4) What did Alice have that kept her dream alive within her?
- 5) What did she say to herself every night before going to sleep?
- 6) What was announced one day in December at school?

- 7) What was going to make the party extra special?
- 8) How was the gift to be chosen?
- 9) What did Alice request for her gift?
- 10) Who joined Alice at the Christmas party?
- 11) Who won the gift?
- 12) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Jesus teaches us to fill our hearts with joy. When you want a dream to come true for you do you hold your dream in joyful anticipation of it coming true?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #4 states, “Through affirmative prayer and meditation I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.” Do you have the faith to give your dreams to God knowing they will manifest in God’s time and way and that they will be good?

**(Reread Follow Your Dreams)**

- 13) What does being faithful mean to you?
- 14) What does being patient mean to you?
- 15) Do you wait for your dreams to come true in a state of joy filled anticipation?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of a time you had a dream come true. Where you thankful for it? Did you express that gratitude to others and to God?

(PAUSE)

Who would like to share their dream that came true and how they showed their gratitude?

**OLDER CHILDREN:**

Go within and think of a dream you have right now that has not manifested yet. Do you have the faith to stay positive about it until it does? Can you give your dream to God and know all is well?

(PAUSE)

Who would like to share?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I believe in my dreams

I know with God all things are possible

I am confident

I am patient

I am faithful

I am steadfast

I have a positive attitude

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, colored pencils, crayons

Give each child a sheet of paper. Have them draw a picture of what they dream about having. Ask them to be as specific as possible. When everyone is done gather in a

circle and have them share their “dream” with one another. After everyone is done sharing have them sit quietly breathing in and out slowly until they are all quiet. Then ask them to visualize in their minds having their dream come true. At the end of this quiet time tell the children to believe in their dreams and to keep seeing it come true. Have them take their drawings home to look at occasionally in joy filled anticipation.

Activity 2:

Supplies: Board to write on and a marker

Have the children talk about something they would like to have to eat as a snack next Sunday in class. Write the ideas on the board for all to see. Then take a vote by going one by one down the list. When the one snack is selected tell the children to think about having it next Sunday in class all week long and to believe it will happen. Next Sunday have their desired snack waiting for them so they can experience the joy of having a wish fulfilled.

### **Older Children’s Activity:**

Activity 1:

Open a discussion with the class about something their church has a dream about acquiring. Then ask them to come up with a creative way their class could help manifest that dream coming true. Create a plan together that the group could present to the congregation and steps they would take to make the dream come true. Then be sure to follow through so they can see and experience the joy of manifesting a dream come true for someone else.

Activity 2:

Form a circle and do some deep breathing until everyone is quiet. Slowly read to them Unity youth principle #4, “Through affirmative prayer and meditation I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.” Read it one more time. Then ask them to quietly sit and with their Christ eyes visualize something good they would like to bring out in their lives. Once they have that good identified ask them to release it to God to manifest at the right time and in the right way. After everyone is done explain to them that the practice, they have done is a good one for them to practice throughout their lives.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God give me the faith to believe in my dreams. Even when my outer world does not seem to support these dreams help me to have the strength to keep my faith in them. And as they manifest in my life, I thank You for helping me be patient and faithful.

Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## GOOD QUALITIES

**LEARNING INTENTION:** In this parable the lesson is to love one another just the way we are. Our individual uniqueness is to be seen in the light of love and acceptance. When we accept each other and ourselves as individual expressions of God we bring peace into the world. For each of us to bring peace to the world we first have to find our own peace within ourselves. We must learn to love ourselves just as we are in our unique expression of life. From that self-acceptance we can appreciate and love the uniqueness of others and have a loving relationship with them.

- A) Love and accept yourself just as you are
- B) Love and accept others just as they are
- C) Unity youth principle #1 states, “God is good and active in everything, everywhere.”

**BIBLE VERSE:** Ephesians 1:6 “To the praise of the glory of His grace by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

## GOOD QUALITIES



Eddie was a young male elephant who was a new arrival at All Animals Wildlife Park. He was out wandering around exploring his new surroundings when he spotted a most unusual looking creature. He had never seen anything quite like it before. It had the shape of a large bird and was covered in the most beautiful display of features that Eddie had ever seen. Eddie walked over to the strange looking bird and introduced himself.

“Hi my name is Eddie and I am new here. I have never seen such a beautiful display of feathers before. What kind of a bird are you?” he asked.

“Hello Eddie my name is Arthur and I am a peacock. We are certainly different looking animals, one from another, aren’t we now,” Arthur exclaimed. “Why do you have such a long nose may I ask?”

“That is my trunk,” Eddie explained. “I use it to pick up things and to smell with. What do you use?”

“I have a beak for all of those purposes,” Arthur explained. “And Eddie where are your feathers?”

“I don’t have feathers,” Eddie replied. “I have a thick hide to protect me from the outside world. What are your feathers for?”

“They protect me from the outside world like your hide does for you. I can also make the ones on my tail stand up; see?” With that said, Arthur then spread out his tail feathers into a beautiful fan behind him to show his new friend.

“Wow,” Eddie exclaimed. “You are beautiful when you do that. We are so different in the many ways we are made. Isn’t it wonderful?”

Arthur smiled and nodded in agreement.

### **DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Who was Eddie?
- 2) Where had he just arrived at?
- 3) Who is Arthur?
- 4) Why does Eddie have a long nose?
- 5) What does Arthur have instead of a nose?
- 6) What other differences did Eddie and Arthur have from one another?
- 7) What was their reaction to these differences?
- 8) Do you know people who are different from you?
- 9) Do you love them as Jesus teaches us to?
- 10) Do you know that just as you are God loves you?
- 11) **YOUNGER CHILDREN:**

Think of something about yourself that is different. Do you love that part of yourself?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #1 states, "God is good and active in everything, everywhere." Do you see God's good in everything, everywhere?

**(Reread Good Qualities)**

- 12) What does acceptance of yourself mean to you?
- 13) What does acceptance of others mean to you?
- 14) What is a unique quality that you have that you like?
- 15) What is a unique quality about yourself you don't like?
- 16) What can you do to learn to like that part of yourself also?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of something unique about someone you know. Do you see that person and their uniqueness as God in expression?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share whom they thought of and if they see God there?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of a person who is so different from you that you have a hard time seeing them with compassion/love. Now sit quietly and see them as a valid expression of God's love just the way they are. Can you feel acceptance now for them now?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their experience?

### **Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I see everyone and everything as an expression of God's love

I am a caring person

I am compassionate

I am polite to others

I am reverent towards all life

I am tactful

I am tolerant

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

### **Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: Large sheet of plain paper, paper, colored pencils, crayons, scissors, pins

Pin the large piece of white paper on a wall. Draw the outline of a peacock on it facing front. Have each child draw a peacock's tail feather in either colored pencil or crayon and cut it out. Pin each feather on the body of the peacock as the tail fanned out. Gather around and see and talk about each unique feather/child.

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper, colored pencils, crayons.

Give each child a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of an animal they think is different and showing what that difference is. When done share the pictures and discuss the different animals and what makes them unique and why the child likes them.

### **Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: a large piece of plain paper, pins, marker

Pin the paper to a wall and gather the children around and have a discussion about all the ways humans are unique such as gender, race, shapes, etc. List them on the paper on the wall. Then discuss how we can all learn to love and accept our differences and realize they are good qualities that make us individuals.

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper, crayons, colored pencils

Have each child draw a picture of themselves as a different species – a plant, animal - insect, bird, mammal – depicting its good qualities and then share, having each child explain how the good qualities in their animal relate to the good qualities within themselves.

### **THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, thank you for the uniqueness that I am. Teach me to see that uniqueness through the eyes of love. Thank you for the uniqueness of others and teach me to see them through the eyes of love also.

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## GOOD THOUGHTS

**LEARNING INTENTION:** This parable teaches the lessons of always doing the best you can and to enjoy yourself while you are doing it. Jesus teaches us to fill our hearts with joy. We can do this daily in all we do if we also understand his teaching that we reap what we sow; planting our best seeds with joy will bring a bountiful harvest. We learn about our joy through trying new challenges and doing the best we can within those challenges. From these experiences we learn how to always put our best foot forward and to enjoy our lives.

- A) Enjoy being who you are
- B) Always do the best you can
- C) Unity youth principle #5 states, “I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference.”

**BIBLE VERSE:** Psalms 126:5 “Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

## GOOD THOUGHTS



Henry and Ben were cousins living in a small rural town and both were 10 years old. The boys were in the same grade in school and did most things together. People thought they were brothers rather than cousins. There was one big difference between them though; Henry always seemed to have things go in his favor while Ben always seemed to not have things go in his favor.

Ben decided to ask Henry why he always seemed to get the prize while he, Ben, never did. There had been a contest at school recently for collecting toys for needy children and Henry had collected the most while Ben had collected the least.

“How come you always do better than me in whatever we do?” Ben asked his cousin. “You never seem to struggle with anything. You just go along doing something, having a good time and you win,” he continued.

Ben laughed, “Maybe you just answered your own question. Instead of worrying about how well I am doing, if I am ahead, if I am winning, I just do my best and have a

good time while I am doing it. I think that combination of doing the very best you can at what you are doing and enjoying the task makes for a winning combination.”

“Well you sure do well at whatever you do and you enjoy it. It is worth a try,”

Ben replied.

**DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Who are Henry and Ben?
- 2) What is their relationship with one another?
- 3) What is the big difference between them?
- 4) What did Ben ask Henry after he lost a contest that Henry won?
- 5) What does Henry do to win?
- 6) What is Henry’s definition of a winning combination?
- 7) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and ask yourself if you always do your best at a task or chore.

Do you enjoy yourself while you are doing it?

**OLDER CHILDREN:**

Unity youth principle #5 states, “I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference.” Do you do your best in what you do and have a positive attitude while doing it?

**(Reread Good Thoughts)**

- 8) Are you enthusiastic about life?
- 9) Do you enjoy being who you are?
- 10) Do you know what self-discipline is?
- 11) Do you use your self-discipline to do tasks well?

12) Do you always try to put your best foot forward?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of something that you have to do frequently, like a chore, that you don't like to do. See yourself deciding to do your best with it and enjoying doing it. Do you see what a difference you can make in your life with a positive attitude?

(PAUSE)

Who would like to share their experience?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Think of some chore or task that you avoid doing because you don't like to do it and you never do it well. Now find a way to enjoy it and see yourself doing it well. Who changed you or the task?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share what they experienced?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I use my creativity in all I do

I am enthusiastic about my life

I do my best at whatever I do

I have a good time being me

I have the self-discipline to do tasks well

I am steadfast in always putting my best foot forward

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

### **Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, crayons, colored pencils

Have each child draw 2 pictures of themselves, one doing something they don't like to do and one doing something they do like to do. When the 2 pictures are done have them do a third. This time they are to draw a picture of themselves enjoying the task they drew of what they don't like doing. Encourage them to take this positive attitude into all that they do.

Activity 2:

Supplies: large sheet of paper, marker, pins

Give each child the homework of asking an adult in their lives, such as a parent or teacher, how they could help them. Help them decide on someone and be sure each child has chosen someone. Pin the sheet of paper to a wall and write down each child's name and person they will help on the paper. Save the sheet until next Sunday. Challenge them to do whatever the task is to the very best of their ability and with joy. The following Sunday ask them how they did and let them share their stories with each other.

### **Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Sit in a circle and go around the circle one by one asking each child to tell the rest of the class about something they have to frequently do that they don't enjoy doing. Have the other children offer suggestions on how they could find a positive way to handle the situation. Encourage each child to give the more positive approach a try and see what happens.

Activity 2:

Supplies: dust clothes, brooms, dust pans

Give the class the task of cleaning the classroom. Tell them to do it from joy and to do the very best job they can do. Afterwards ask them if they kept a positive attitude and enjoyed themselves. Encourage them to take this positive attitude into their lives and use it in whatever tasks they do each day.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, as I learn to appreciate the uniqueness You have created me to be help me to find my joy within my uniqueness. Help me to express my joy in all circumstances and to do my very best I can within those circumstances. Thank You for your ever-present guidance and love. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## **LEADING THE WAY**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** In this parable the benefits of taking action to solve a problem rather than reacting to the problem is taught. Jesus teaches that our answers lie within us. By looking for answers within us instead of just reacting to a situation we will be guided to our good. Overcoming our fear is a big lesson to learn. Through every experience we have we are always at choice. We can choose to react in fear, or we can choose to take a deep breath, go within and ask for guidance. Then we need to follow that guidance in faith and trust. By doing this we can act in a positive way to life and its challenges.

- A) Act don't react to a situation
- B) Go within for answers on how to move forward
- C) Unity youth principle #3 states, "I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe."

**BIBLE VERSE:** Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you."

## LEADING THE WAY



George and his younger sister Ruthie had gone shopping with their mother. They went to a large department store downtown to get some new clothes for school which was starting next month. The store was so crowded with kids and their moms that George was sure every kid in his school was there. George was holding Ruthie's hand so they wouldn't get separated from their Mom. All of a sudden, he noticed neither he nor Ruthie was holding a hand of their mother. George looked all around and could not find his mother anywhere in the crowd. He asked Ruthie, "Do you see Mom anywhere?"

"No," Ruthie replied, fear creeping into her voice. "Don't you know where she is?"

"No, I don't. How did we manage to get separated from her amidst all these people?" George answered back.

"Oh George, I am scared. What if we can't find her? Do you think she will find us?" Ruthie asked.

“I don’t know, but instead of standing here scared let’s do something to find her,” George told his sister.

“Like what? Ruthie asked. “This is a big place and she could be anywhere.”

“Yes, she could,” George said. “But I have a plan. You just keep holding my hand and let’s start walking until we find a sales counter. Then we will ask the salesperson for help.”

George and Ruthie tightly held each other's hands and slowly moved through all the shoppers looking for a sales counter. Soon they spotted one off to their left. They made their way over and found a saleslady standing behind the counter watching them as they approached.

“Hi, my name is George and this is my little sister Ruthie. We lost our mother and don’t know how to find her. Can you help us?” George asked.

“Why of course I can sweetie. My name is Elsie. Why don’t the two of you come around the counter and join me back here. I will use our PA system to announce throughout the entire store that the two of you are right here safe and sound with me. I am sure she is looking for you also,” Elsie gently told them.

George and Ruthie went behind the counter and stood next to Elsie. Elsie picked up a phone behind the counter and made an announcement that went throughout the entire store. “Would the mother of George and Ruthie please come to the cosmetic counter on the first floor? Your children are here waiting for you.”

Before long a woman with a look of great relief was standing at the counter. “Oh, my precious children I found you at last. I was so worried,” the woman said.

Both George and Ruthie beamed ear to ear when they saw their mother standing there in front of them. Both said in unison “Oh Mommy we are so glad you are here.”

They ran from behind the counter into their mother’s waiting arms.

“This is Elsie,” George said pointing to the lady behind the counter.” She is the one who told you were to find us.

“Thank you, Elsie,” George’s mother told Elsie. “You have made my day!” Then George, Ruthie and their mother joined hands and mingled back into the crowd of shoppers.

**DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Where were George, his sister Ruthie and their Mother?
- 2) What were they doing there?
- 3) Why was George holding Ruthie’s hand?
- 4) Whose hand weren’t either one of them holding?
- 5) What was Ruthie’s reaction to being separated from her Mother?
- 6) What was George’s reaction?
- 7) What did George want to do instead of standing around and being scared?
- 8) What plan did he have?
- 9) Where did the plan come from?
- 10) Who helped George and Ruthie?
- 11) What did she do to tell their Mother where they were?
- 12) What was their Mother’s reaction when they all got back together?
- 13) Can you come up with a positive plan of action instead of being afraid in a new experience?

14) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of a situation you are facing that you feel afraid of.

Are you willing to go within and ask for guidance to come up with a positive plan of action?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle # 3 states, "I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe". It takes courage to trust your inner guidance ~ the Christ within. As you get older are you learning to have the self-discipline to trust your inner voice?

**(Reread Leading the Way)**

15) What does inner guidance mean to you?

16) Can you listen to your inner guidance and not your fears?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of an experience you've had recently that scared you. Now go deeper and see if you can come up with a positive plan of action to take away the fear.

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their positive plan of action?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Go within and ask your inner Christ for guidance on an experience you are having in your life right now that makes you uncomfortable. Stay there until you receive some kind of guidance.

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share the help they received?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I am confident with my own inner guidance

I am courageous and seek my own answers within me

I am patient with myself in all situations

I am responsible for my life

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, crayons, colored pencils

Ask the children if one of them would lead the class in a drawing project. Have that child decide what everyone will draw – a flower, animal, themselves, the teacher. Then share their drawings with the leader handling the conversation.

Activity 2:

Sit in a circle and have each child, one by one, lead the class in a short prayer. After everyone is done ask them how they felt as they led their prayer. Let them share freely with one another what it felt like to be the leader.

**Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Sit together in a circle and give the children an event that is disturbing like being separated from someone in a crowded store. Have them think about ways to solve the problem in ways that show positive leadership skills and share with the class. Examples could be

- 1) being locked out of the house
- 2) being left out of an adventure with friends
- 3) missing the school bus
- 4) failing a test at school

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper, pen for the teacher

Before Sunday's class talk with your minister and find out if the church could offer some leadership role for the youth group to fulfill. In class tell the children about the role from the minister and challenge them to come up with a unique way the class could handle the role. Once a good way has been established ask one of the children to volunteer to tell the minister. After the minister gives the OK make sure the whole class follows through fulfilling the role.

### **THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, thank You for your loving guidance that is always there within me.  
Help me to learn to seek your guidance in all areas of my life rather than to react to them.

I know You will lead me aright. Thank You. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## **LEMONADE**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** This parable teaches that every experience has something good in it to share with you. It is up to you to find it. Jesus teaches us not to judge by appearances and to seek the good in everything. Jesus also teaches us “I of myself can do nothing”. Always ask yourself where the good in this experience is; where is God in this. When you see God, you see the good. If you learn to go within and seek the good you can live life from a place to love and acceptance. Accepting what is and making the best of it turns the hard lessons from lemons to lemonade.

- A) Accept what is
- B) See the good in it
- C) Unity youth principle #1 states, “God is good and active in everything, everywhere.”

**BIBLE VERSE:** Matthew 13:38 “The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.”

## LEMONADE



It was a sunny, warm day out in the orange orchard. The trees were soaking up all the sun's rays they could so their oranges would turn golden orange and juicy sweet to the taste. This year the orange trees had a new member among them. Several years ago, a young tree, or sapling as they are called, sprang up from the ground amongst them. It looked just like a baby orange tree so they thought nothing special about it. However, this year was the first time the new tree was old enough to bear fruit. The other trees noticed there was something different about its fruit ~ it was yellow and small when ripe not big and orange like theirs.

Today the orchard pickers were out in the orchard picking the fruit to harvest. Two men came into the area where the tree with the yellow fruit was growing. As they approached the particular tree, they both did a double take and then laughed.

“How did a lemon tree wind up in an orange orchard?” one of the pickers asked the other. “Shall we tell the boss and see if he wants us to cut it down?”

“Heck no,” replied the other picker. “Have you ever heard the wise old saying that says when life gives you lemons make lemonade? Let’s pick a few lemons to take home and make some lemonade and see how it tastes. If it’s good maybe our kids would like to have a lemonade stand this summer. They could make real lemonade right from this tree. Then with the money they make they can buy something they want.”

“Sounds like a good idea to me. Let’s pick about six lemons and give it a try.”

**DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Why were the orange trees in the orchard soaking up the sun?
- 2) Have you ever had a ripe orange right off the tree?
- 3) What did it taste like?
- 4) What did the orange trees find growing amidst them?
- 5) What was different about this new tree?
- 6) Who came to the orchard to pick the fruit?
- 7) What did one of the pickers want to ask the boss about what to do about the lemon tree?
- 8) What did the other picker suggest they do instead?
- 9) If the lemons tasted good, what did the picker have in mind for his children to help them raise some money over the summer?
- 10) Do you know how to look for the good in a situation?
- 11) Do you do that?
- 12) Have you ever had a summer lemonade stand or something similar?

13) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and ask yourself if life offers you a lemon do you know how to make lemonade out of it? If not, are you willing to learn how?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #1 states, “God is good and active in everything, everywhere.” Have you learned Jesus’ lesson to look for the good in everything? Are you willing to learn how?

**(Reread Lemonade)**

14) What is a “lemon” in your life you need to make into lemonade?

15) Do you see God/good in this situation?

16) Can you follow God’s guidance and turn that lemon into lemonade?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and recall a recent experience you had that you reacted negatively to. Now that it is over, can you relive that same experience and see the good in it. Can you see how that makes a big difference?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their experience?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Learning to see God, the good, in a situation takes practice. Go within and imagine a situation where you react in a negative way. Then using your Christ eyes see the situation in a positive way. What is the difference between the two?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share what they discovered?

### **Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I see the good in my life's experiences

I have the courage to look for the good in all things

I can remain detach from outer experiences

I am flexible

I am patient

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

### **Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, crayons, colored pencils

Have each child draw a picture showing both an orange and a lemon. Tell them to show all the ways they are different like size, and color. As they are drawing get them to talk about the differences, including things like taste and how they are used in different ways. End the discussion by asking the children about all the good things they know about an orange and a lemon.

Activity 2:

Supplies: plates, napkins, a knife and enough oranges and lemons for each child to get a half of each

Cut each orange and lemon in half. Put half a lemon and half an orange on a plate. Give a plate and napkin to each child. Have them smell each and taste each. Then ask them which they like the best and why. Then encourage them to revisit the less popular fruit and discover qualities they like about it, teaching them to find good in all things.

### **Older Children's Activities:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, colored markers

Create a plan with the class to do a lemonade stand one Sunday after service. Create signs, LEMONADE 25cents, find a good spot to have it, select a table and chairs. Ask if any of the children could bring pitchers from home and an ice chest. The teacher's responsibility is to provide the ice and the lemonade, cups and napkins. Decide what you want to do with the money raised, bringing up the idea of tithing 10% to the church.

Activity 2:

Supplies: Print Unity youth principle #1 on sheets of paper, one for each child.

Hand out the sheets with the Unity youth principle #1 to each child. Read the principle to the class. Then start a discussion asking the children what that means to them, one child at a time. Then ask them, one by one, how they see the principle manifesting in their lives. Encourage them to listen to one another and to learn how to be even more aware of God's presence in their lives. End with all the children saying the principle together.

### **THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, thank you for always being with me to show me the good in every situation. Help me to learn to turn within to You for guidance and to trust that guidance as I move forward in my life. Through your good I can see life as You created it to be.

Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## **PLAIN BEAUTY**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** In this parable Jesus' teaching to not judge by appearances is taught. By bringing out our inner beauty we shine our light for everyone to see.

Everyone has their unique light within them to bring to the world. That light is within everyone. It is our gift to express in our lives. When we shine our light, be who we are, in what we do we are beautiful. That beauty will be recognized by others and appreciated. It is not how you look on the outside but how you act from your inner light that counts.

- A) Accept who you are
- B) Shine your inner light in all you do
- C) Unity youth principle #1 states, God is good and active in everything, everywhere.”

**BIBLE VERSE:** Ecclesiastes 3:11 “He has made everything beautiful in its time.”

## PLAIN BEAUTY



Lucy was a quiet and observant child. She did not say much but she saw what was going on around her at the level of what was actually happening. To explain, here is an experience she recently had.

There was a recent contest in Lucy's school class. The children had to present to the class an experience that was a big deal to them. Five classmates had been selected out of the entire classroom to present their reports. Lucy was one of them. The class would vote after all the presentations were made as to whom they thought had done the best presentation. The five contestants drew numbers to determine the order of presentation. Lucy picked number 5. Finally, the big day came. The one to beat out of all five contestants in Lucy's mind was Mary. Mary was the third presenter. The reason she was the one to beat in Lucy's opinion was because she was so pretty and so self-assured.

Mary could present anything and win because she was so pretty. Despite this “handicap” that Lucy perceived, she went ahead when it was her turn, and made the best presentation that she could.

After everyone presented, the prize was awarded to Lucy because she had done such a good job presenting her experience of a big deal in her life. As Lucy went up to receive her prize amidst the applause of her classmates, she realized that compared to Mary she might be plain on the outside, but there was beauty within her that she had to express that was more beautiful.

**DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) How is Lucy described at the beginning of the parable?
- 2) What kind of contest was Lucy’s school class having?
- 3) What number did Lucy draw for her turn?
- 4) Who is Mary?
- 5) What number did she draw?
- 6) Why did Lucy think Mary would be hard to beat in the contest?
- 7) What did Lucy do when it was her turn to present?
- 8) Who won the contest?
- 9) Where did Lucy discover her true beauty was?
- 10) Do you have the confidence to compete against someone you think is better than you?
- 11) Do you know the inner beauty you have?
- 12) **YOUNGER CHILDREN:**

Jesus teaches us to look for the good in everyone. This includes YOU.

Go within and see the good within that you have to share with the world.

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #1 states, “God is good and active in everything, everywhere.” This includes YOU. Can you name some good qualities that you have?

**(Reread Plain Beauty)**

13) Do you have the courage to always do your best in a challenging situation?

14) Do you know how to tap into your creativity?

15) Do you trust yourself to do the best you can?

16) Do you have the self-discipline to keep the high watch during difficult times?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and remember a time you did well at something that challenged you. What good thing about yourself stands out about this time?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Go within and think about a part of you where you feel you excel. How can you share your light with the world?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share their light?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I have the courage to share my light with the world

I tap into my own creativity

I am honest with myself

I trust myself

I have self-discipline

I am determined to be my best self

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Sit in a circle. Start a discussion by first asking each child to think of something good about themselves. Then go around the circle, one by one, and have each child stand up and state their good quality starting with "I am..." Then ask the other children to state a good quality for the person speaking. After each child has had their turn, stating their good quality and receiving input from the others, have a discussion about how they felt saying something good about themselves and receiving good comments from others.

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper, crayons, colored pencils

Have the children draw two pictures of themselves. One picture is of them "plain" and the other one is of them "beautiful". Share the drawings giving each child the opportunity to tell how they saw themselves as both "plain" and "beautiful". Ask which they prefer feeling "plain" or "beautiful". Encourage them to remember feeling "beautiful" when they feel "plain". Close by having them repeat after you "I am a beautiful child of God."

### **Older Children's Activity:**

#### Activity 1:

Ask for three volunteers to get up and make a presentation to the class in 5 minutes or less based on a big deal in their lives. Give them 5 minutes to prepare their presentation. Have the 3 volunteers go to the back of the room to get ready. As they do so quietly instruct the rest of the class to judge three points in each presentation:

- 1) content
- 2) style of presentation
- 3) ease of presentation

After the three presentations have the class vote on their favorite one based on the stated three points. Then discuss why they liked that one based on those three points.

#### Activity 2:

Pick one of the Example Statements before class to use in class. Form a circle and ask each child what the Example Statement means to them. Example could be "I Have self-discipline". After all, have had a turn have them share what they learned from one another hearing each unique version of the Example Statement.

### **THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God help me to see myself as the beautiful person you have created me to be. Teach me to not judge myself by what I see in the outer world but to accept myself as Your unique expression. I am Your creation and may I always remember this as I walk my life's journey. Thank you. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## **SIMPLE BEAUTY**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** In this parable the lesson is taught that there is something beautiful in a simple act. By teaching yourself to look for it you will be practicing Jesus' teaching to do your actions for the good of all. Helping others is a beautiful thing to do by itself. By helping one another through good acts of kindness we help to create a world that works for everyone and what a beautiful world that will be. We will be fulfilling God's plan of us all living together as one family in peace and love.

- A) Look for the simple beauty of life in all your actions
- B) Be willing to help
- C) Do your actions for the good of all
- D) Unity youth principle #5 I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference."

**BIBLE VERSE:** 2 Peter 1: 5-7 "Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to kindness love."

## SIMPLE BEAUTY



Karla and her brother Harry were up to their armpits in chores. They were at their Grandmother's for a month during summer vacation from school. Grandmother had decided to use their youthful energy to get a few things done around her small farm. Each morning after breakfast, Grandmother looked at Karla and Harry then smiled and said, "now for your morning chores. There is nothing like getting out into the fresh air and using your muscles to do something that needs to be done."

Karla and Harry had only been at the farm a week. They had already mowed the lawn, weeded the flowerbeds, and swept the barn. This particular morning, they were to brush Grandmother's two ponies. The two ponies gently neighed as they entered the barn. Karla decided they should take the ponies outside into the sunlight to brush them. Slowly and softly they brushed while the ponies stood very still, soaking up all the loving attention. When Karla and Harry were done brushing, they both stepped back to admire the ponies.

“Look,” Karla said. “They are smiling at us. We are making them so happy by simply brushing them.”

“Yeah,” Harry replied. “I have been noticing that these simple chores we do each morning have a certain beauty to them. The lawn looked beautiful after we cut it. The flowerbeds and the vegetable gardens looked beautiful after we weeded them. The barn looked beautiful after we swept it clean. Now these two ponies look beautiful after we brushed them. These are all simple things we have done and each one has created a thing of beauty.”

Karla totally agreed. “Like Grandmother is always telling us ‘look for the beauty in simple things.’”

### **DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Where were Karla and her brother Harry spending the summer?
- 2) What were they “up to their armpits” in?
- 3) How long were they staying at their Grandmother’s farm?
- 4) What did Grandmother have for them to do each morning after breakfast?
- 5) What are some of the chores they had already done?
- 6) What was their chore this particular morning?
- 7) Where did Karla and Harry take the ponies to brush them?
- 8) What had Harry noticed about the simple chores they did every morning?
- 9) What was Grandmother always telling Karla and Harry to look for?
- 10) Do you have chores you are responsible for?
- 11) Do you see the beauty you create by doing them?
- 12) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Go within and think of one of your chores that you like. See the beauty you create by doing it.

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #5 states, "I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know." See the beauty you create for yourself and others by giving your best in all that you do.

**(Reread Simple Beauty)**

13) How do your good deeds make others respond to you?

14) How does that make you feel?

15) Do you see how helping others is a good thing to do?

16) What are some ways you enjoy helping others?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Slowly take 3 deep breaths and release them to quiet your mind and body. Then go within and think of a chore you have that you don't like to do. Can you see the good in it by doing it for others?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Take 3 deep breaths and slowly release them. This will quiet your mind and body. Then go within and think of something you could do for someone that would help them. See yourself doing it. Can you see the beauty in this simple act?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I am a caring person

I see the beauty in simple things

I am considerate of others

I show friendliness by helping others

I am kind

I am respectful

I see the reverence in all of life

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, colored pencils, crayons

Have the children draw a picture of one of the activities mentioned in the parable.

- 1) Mowing the lawn
- 2) Weeding the flower bed
- 3) Sweeping the barn
- 4) Brushing the two ponies

Emphasize to them to make them simple and beautiful drawings. Share the drawings at the end of class talking about the beauty that can be found in a simple chore.

Activity 2:

Supplies: paper, crayons, colored pencils

Have each child draw a picture of Karla and Harry's grandmother's farm, showing the house, the barn, the lawn, the flowers, and the ponies making it simple and beautiful.

**Older Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Sit in a circle and start a discussion on the specific chore of doing homework. Ask the class to share with one another how to make the chore simple. Ask them if they can see the beauty in the chore, such as in the example of getting a good grade or learning something new. At the end of the discussion encourage them to take what they have learned through the discussion into their homework chores.

Activity 2:

Supplies: pens, lined paper

Hand out the supplies to each student. Ask them to write a brief essay, 300 words or less, describing an unpleasant chore in their lives and what they can do to break it down into simple steps to bring out its beauty. Have them make it short and simple. Then sit together and let those students who want to share their essay with the rest of the class. The goal of this exercise is to help the students train themselves to look for the simple solutions to problems and learn the beauty of simplicity.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, help me to find Your simple beauty in my life. Whatever my day presents to me to do may I remain centered in knowing if I take care of the simple things its beauty will be revealed. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

Wherever we are God is and all is well.

## **THE JOYFUL SMILE**

**LEARNING INTENTION:** In this parable Jesus' teaching that we love one another and care for one another by looking for the good of all concerned is brought out. By showing an act of loving kindness towards another we show our love and let our light shine. Life has its ups and downs and having both a positive attitude and having friends to share those ups and downs with is always a blessing. In good times we can share our joy together and in the difficult times we can help one another by offering loving support. By being considerate of one another we can show our kindness to them and support through challenging times.

- A) Love one another
- B) Care for one another
- C) Try to bring out the good in all situations
- D) Unity youth principle # 2 states, "I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and in everyone."

**BIBLE VERSE:** Ephesians 4:32 "And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgives you."

## THE JOYFUL SMILE



Lilly was known as the *Pollyanna* of her eight-grade class in school. Lilly always had a smile to greet you and a positive attitude about things. Her classmates teased her because of this and her teachers tried to make her understand that sometimes in life things were bad. Lilly believed it was always best to look for the silver lining on every cloud.

One day one of Lilly's classmates, a girl named Mary, was feeling very sad. Her dog Burt had died the night before. When Mary went down to the kitchen to say good morning to Burt he didn't wake up. Scared, Mary ran to her mom.

"Quick mom," Mary said "I can't get Burt to wake up."

The two of them ran into the kitchen to Burt's bed. Sure enough, just like Mary had said Burt wouldn't wake up for them. Mary's mom knew right away that Burt was gone and wouldn't be back. He had died in his sleep over night.

“Mary, I am afraid that Burt’s time here with us is now over and he has died. He was an old dog and passed peacefully in his sleep during the night. I am so sorry,”

Mary’s mom told her. She hugged Mary and told her she needed to get ready for school.

“What will happen to Burt’s body now Mom?” Mary asked.

“Don’t worry I’ll take care of everything today while you are in school,” her mother replied and gave her daughter a kiss.

When Lilly saw Mary at school that morning, she could tell she was very upset.

“What is wrong?” Lilly asked her.

“My dog Burt died last night. My mom said he died peacefully in his sleep because he was an old dog. I am so sad about it. I really loved him.”

“I am so sorry. But at least he died peacefully after having a full life of love and happiness with you and your family. He had a good life Mary and you will always have fond memories of him. He was a good friend to you. Who knows maybe someday you will get another dog to love.” Mary gave her a look of gratitude.

With that Lilly gave Mary one of her brightest smiles. Mary couldn’t help but smile back. She started to think about how much she loved Burt and how much fun they had had together over the years. Like magic her sadness lifted and she felt better.

### **DISCUSSION WITH QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Who was Lilly known as in her class at school?
- 2) Why was she called Pollyanna?
- 3) What two things did Lilly always have to greet people with?
- 4) What did Lilly’s teachers try to teach her?
- 5) What did Lilly always look for in every cloud?

- 6) Why was Mary sad?
- 7) How did Burt die?
- 8) What did Lilly tell Mary about Burt's death?
- 9) What did Lilly give Mary that helped her feel better?
- 10) YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Have you experienced the death of a pet yet? If so, who helped you get through it and how did they help you?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Unity youth principle #1 states, "I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and in everyone". Have you ever shared your love with someone who is hurting? How did it make you and the other person feel?

**(Reread the Joyful Smile)**

- 11) When you are sad do you try to look for some good within the situation?
- 12) Do you know that by finding something good within a situation you will be able to move forward in a positive way?
- 13) Can you name some positive ways to move forward during a difficult time?
- 14) Are you willing to do that in your daily life?

YOUNGER CHILDREN:

Become quiet in mind and body by taking three deep breaths and slowly releasing them. Think of someone in your life right now who is unhappy. How can you show them love to help them feel better? Are you willing to do that?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share?

OLDER CHILDREN:

Take three deep breaths and slowly release them letting your mind and body become still. Imagine a friend coming to you very upset because their dog had died. What could you do to show them your love and help them feel better? Are you willing to do it?

(PAUSE)

Who wants to share?

**Example Statements: Read Aloud**

I am caring

I am compassionate

I am considerate

I am gentle

I am kind

I show my love to my friends in all ways

**CREATIVE EXPERIENCE:** Select the activity that focuses on what you want to emphasize from this lesson.

**Younger Children's Activity:**

Activity 1:

Supplies: paper, crayons colored pencils

Have each child draw two pictures. Ask them to draw a picture of a sad Mary and the second as a grateful Mary after Lilly's healing words. When the drawings are all done, ask the children about a time they were comforted by someone else's words of compassion/love.

Activity 2:

Sit together and have an open discussion about what each example statement means to them. What does it mean to be:

Caring

Compassionate

Considerate

Gentle

Kind

Show love

### **Older Children's Activity:**

#### Activity 1:

Expand on the Older Children exercise at the end of the questions. Sit together in a circle and do some deep breathing to quiet everyone down. Then, one by one, ask each child to relate a sad incident in their lives, like the loss of a favorite pet. Ask the other children if they can share compassion towards the situation and bring out a positive way to deal with the sad situation. At the end ask the children if they felt better after their classmates' suggestions to help them heal from their loss.

#### Activity 2:

Supplies: Print out the Example Statements, one for each child

See if you can arrange a field trip to a local assisted living facility for the children. The Sunday before the field trip tell the children about the visit and that they will be going to visit to bring some joy to the residents with their visit. If you have a large class ask for 10 volunteers. Discuss the example statements that you have handed out to each child one by one and how to apply them on their visit. Have them take the statement list

home and review it during the week before the visit. The Sunday after the visit have the children share their experience at the facility and how they used the example statements.

**THE CLOSING:**

Stand or sit in a circle together holding hands, eyes closed. Read the closing prayer and then the Unity Prayer for Protection.

Dear God, teach me to be a loving person to both myself and others. May I always look for the good for all and bring it out as best I can. May I be an example of Your love and caring in all my interactions with others. Thank you. Amen

Then the Unity prayer for protection:

The light of God surrounds us,

The love of God enfolds us

The power of God protects us,

The presence of God watches over us.

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