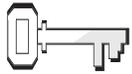


Payday at the Vineyard



References

Matthew 20:1-16;
Christ's Object Lessons,
pp. 396-404



Memory Verse

"God does not show favoritism" (Acts 10:34).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that God does not favor people.
Feel glad that God treats us better than we deserve.
Respond by treating others as He treats us.



The Message

God wants us to treat others as He treats us.

Monthly Theme

We treat each other as God treats us.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

A landowner begins hiring men early in the morning to work in his vineyard. He agrees to pay them a fair wage for a day's work. At various times during the day he hires other workers, right up to one hour before quitting time. At quitting time the vineyard owner tells his foreman to pay the workers, starting with the ones who were hired last. No matter how long they had worked, each worker is paid the same amount. The workers who worked longest complain. The landowner reminds them that he paid them what they agreed to.

This is a lesson about community.

God treats people well not because they have earned it, but because He is a loving God who treats people better than they deserve. God does not show favoritism. In response to His marvelous grace God wants His people to treat others the way He treats them—with love and acceptance.

Teacher Enrichment

The first hour would be at 6:00 a.m.; the third hour, 9:00 a.m.; the sixth hour, noon; the ninth hour, 3:00 p.m.; the eleventh hour, 5:00 p.m. During the day workers would gather in the marketplace. The employers would go there and hire workers for the day or part of it. This is still a common practice in some parts of the world.

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	<i>A. Who's More Important?</i> <i>B. Line Up!</i>	old magazines, scissors, glue, tape, construction paper, Bible small gifts such as stickers, flowers, pencils; Bible
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> heart-shaped container none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	farmer's hat, small pieces of paper with questions written on them (see Debriefing) Bible, six inflated balloons, marker Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Fair or Unfair?</i>	Bibles
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Do Unto Others</i>	coupons (see p. 141), pens or pencils

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Give directions for the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity that is most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- old magazines
- glue
- tape
- construction paper
- Bible

A. Who's More Important?

Ask each student to cut five pictures of people out of an old magazine. Encourage them to find pictures of a wide variety of people (homeless, children, elderly, professionals, celebrities, etc.) and to be creative with cutting and cropping. Tape or glue each picture to a separate piece of construction paper, and tape each paper to a wall or door. Ask the students to help you arrange the pictures according to which person is most important.

Debriefing

Ask: **Where would you put your own picture in this lineup? Why did you choose some people as more important than others?** Read aloud Acts 10:34. **Does God see one person as more important or more valuable than another? How would God arrange these pictures?** (All would be equal.) **Today's message is:**



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- small gifts such as stickers, flowers, pencils
- Bible

B. Line Up!

Tell the students to line up so you can give them a surprise. Be sure to designate a place as the head of the line and allow them to struggle a little for the first place in line. Once they are lined up, begin at the back of the line and distribute small gifts (stickers, flowers, pencils, etc.).

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when the last person got the surprise first? Whom do we often consider to be "the first"?** (the best looking, the richest, the smartest, etc.) **Whom do we often consider to be "the last"?** (the less attractive, the poor, those who are clumsy or not as intelligent, etc.) Read aloud Matthew 20:16. **What does this verse tell us about how God sees people? about how we should treat others? Today's message is:**



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

- "We Are His Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 129)
- "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 139)
- "We Are the Church" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 141)
- "Wonderful, Wonderful" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 39)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Help the children identify a situation where someone received more than they deserved or treated someone else better than they deserved.



Offering

Remind the children that all our material blessings come from God. Just as God treats us better than we deserve, we share His love when we give so that others can know Him.

You Need:

- heart-shaped container



Prayer

Invite each child to think of someone he or she doesn't like. Suggest that they now pray silently for that person, asking God to treat the person better than they want to. Allow time for silent prayer. Then close the prayer time by thanking God for loving us so much that He treats us better than we deserve.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- farmer's hat
- small pieces of paper with questions written on them (see Debriefing)

Experiencing the Story

Before telling the story, put on a hat that a farmer might wear. Inside the crown, stuff papers with the questions from the Debriefing written on them.

Form three groups as shown in the box below. Each group listed in column 1 listens for certain words, indicated in column 2. When they hear those words, do the action indicated in column 3.

Read or tell the story.

The kingdom of heaven is like a farmer who owned a huge vineyard. Every day the farmer went down to the marketplace. Lots of **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) were standing around shouting and looking for work. And the farmer would take **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) back to help him.

One day the farmer wanted to make juice from his ripe grapes, so he hurried to the marketplace at **6:00 in the morning**. (EARLY BIRDS: *Stand and stretch*.)

So the farmer hired these early birds at **6:00 in the morning**. (EARLY BIRDS: *Stand and stretch*.) And he agreed to pay them the usual pay for a day's work.

Later that morning the farmer came back to the marketplace and hired some more **workers**. (ALL: *Dig*.) And soon they were busy picking grapes in the vineyard.

The farmer went to the marketplace again **at noon**. (NOONERS: *Pick grapes*.)

Again he found **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) standing around. So he said to the people he hired **at noon** (NOONERS: *Pick grapes*), "Go to my vineyard, and I'll pay you what is right." And soon they were busily picking grapes in the vineyard.

The farmer returned to the marketplace **late in the afternoon** (LATECOMERS: *Run in place*). Again he found **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) standing around. "Go to my vineyard, and I'll pay you what is right," he told them. And soon they were busy picking grapes in the vineyard.

At 6:00 the farmer rang the bell for the harvesting to stop. The farmer told his foreman to pay the **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) for their day's work, beginning with those who were hired last. What time did they start? (Late in the afternoon.) So all the **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) gathered around to be paid.

When the **early birds** (*stand and stretch*) saw that the **latecomers** (*run in place*) were paid a full day's wage, they were excited. "Wow! All that for a couple hours of work," they said. "How much more it will be for us because we worked all day." But when the farmer paid them, they received no extra, just the full day's pay they had been promised.

"Wait!" they cried. "This is not fair. Those **latecomers** (*run in place*) worked only for two or three hours. But they got a full day's pay!"

"Am I being unfair to you?" the landowner asked. "You agreed to work for the usual pay for a day's work, and that's

Group	Identifying Phrase	Group Stands and Does Motion
Early Birds	"6:00 in the morning"	Stand and stretch.
Nooners	"At noon"	Pretend to pick grapes.
Latecomers	"Late in the afternoon"	Run in place.
All	"Workers"	Pretend to dig.

what I'm paying you. Now I want to treat this **latecomer** (*run in place*) better than he deserves. Can't I do that with my own money?"

And then the **workers** (ALL: *Dig*) knew that God treats all people better than they deserve. And He does not favor people.

Debriefing

At the end of the story, take off your hat and call volunteers to select a question. They can read the question themselves or ask someone else to read it. The person who reads the question chooses a volunteer to answer it.

1. Why were the early bird workers upset with the farmer? (Because he paid the latecomers so much.)

2. Did the farmer pay anyone less than he deserved? (No, everyone got what they agreed to or more.)

3. How is God like the farmer? (He treats people better than they deserve; He treats people the same; He shows no favoritism; etc.)

4. What did you do to deserve the sunshine today? (Nothing.)

5. Name some gifts from God that you did nothing to deserve. (Accept any reasonable response.)

Ask: **If God treats us better than we deserve, how should we treat others?**

Say today's message with me:



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

Memory Verse

In advance, print each word of the memory verse ("God does not show favoritism" [Acts 10:34]) on an inflated balloon. Write the reference on one of the balloons.

Read aloud Acts 10:34. Have the children form a line. The child with the first balloon says the word on the balloon and

tosses it into the air. The second child says the second word, tosses their balloon in the air, catches the first balloon, and goes to the end of the line. The third child repeats the action.

Continue until the verse has been said several times. If the balloon is missed, the person goes back and does it again. For even more fun, use two teams.

(Adapted from Barbara Manspeaker, compiler, *Quick Access: Children—Ideas for Ministry* [Lincoln, Nebr.: AdventSource, 1999], p. 2.)

Bible Study

Help the children find Matthew 20:1-16 in their Bibles. Divide the children who can read into three groups. Have one group read in unison the narration, one group read in unison what the landowner says, and one group read in unison what the workers say. The nonreaders can try to follow along in their Bibles or listen.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What would you have said to the farmer if you had been one of the first hired? Was the farmer showing favoritism?** (No, but he was treating late comers better than they deserved.)

Sometimes when God treats someone better than we think they deserve, we complain that God is not fair. God loves us all the same and has no favorites. God treats us all better than we deserve. If God treats everyone better than they deserve, how should we treat others? (In the same way.) **Let's remember today's message:**



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- six inflated balloons
- marking pen
- Bible

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:
• Bibles

Fair or Unfair?

Read the following scenarios to the children one at a time. After each, ask: **Is it fair or unfair? How would you feel in that situation?**

You are left out of the midweek soccer team because you will not play in the Saturday league.

You have saved for a long time and finally bought a new MP3 player for yourself. Then someone buys an identical player and gives it to your brother or sister.

Someone else won a game your class is playing together. You know they cheated.

You come in first to win a race, but everyone who ran is given the same prize.

You and your brother (or sister) have been asked to cut the grass and

clean up the yard after school. You cut the grass, but your brother (or sister) plays with friends. Your father thanks you both for doing the work.

You and your sister (or brother) are supposed to go to bed at 8:00. Your sister (or brother) plays with friends instead of doing homework after school. You do your homework, then play. When bedtime comes, your sister (or brother) is allowed to stay up late to get her (or his) homework done.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How does God want us to treat each other when things seem unfair? Let's read Matthew 5:43-48 together.** Allow time. **If we are to treat others as God would treat them, what should we do in all these situations?** (Treat people better than they deserve.)

Isn't it good to know that God loves us and treats us the same even when things that seem unfair happen? Let's remember our message. Say it with me.



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Do Unto Others

Say: **Today we have talked about how things sometimes seem unfair and how God wants us to treat others as He does. It may seem unfair that you are asked to do chores someone else in your family is supposed to do. Or that you have to give up something so someone else can have something.**

Think of such a situation. Maybe something one of your parents has to do, or a time a brother or sister needs something. Think of a way you can treat them as God wants you to. Then complete this coupon. (See page 141.)

Debriefing

Form pairs and have the children tell each other what they will do and practice what they will say when they give their coupon to a family member. Then have the group get back together. Say: **Take your coupon home and share it with someone in your family. Tell them what you have learned today and how you want to treat others. Share today's message with them. Remember ...**



GOD WANTS US TO TREAT OTHERS AS HE TREATS US.

Closing

In a closing prayer, ask God to bless each child as they try to treat others as He would treat them today and every day.

You Need:

- coupons (see p. 141)
- pens or pencils

Payday at the Vineyard

References

Matthew 20:1-16;
Christ's Object Lessons,
 pp. 396-404

Memory Verse

"God does not show favoritism" (Acts 10:34).

The Message

God wants us to treat others as He treats us.

John was busy raking leaves in his yard. After an hour, his friend Liam came by and offered to help. John found another rake, and the two boys worked together.

Two hours later they were done with the job. John's father was very pleased. He gave each boy some money to say "thank you." John and Liam received the same pay, even though John had worked one hour more. John thought to himself, This is not fair. Then he remembered a story Jesus told about fairness.

In Jesus' time, men would gather in the marketplace at 6:00 in the morning. There they would wait for someone to come and hire them. One morning a vineyard owner came looking for workers. At 6:00 he hired some men. He agreed to pay them the usual pay for 12 hours of work.

At 9:00 he came back to the marketplace. He saw men still standing around. "Go work in my vineyard, and I'll pay you what is right," he told them. At noon and at 3:00 he hired more men. Again at 5:00

in the afternoon—just one hour before quitting time—he did the same thing.

At 6:00 in the evening the landowner told his foreman to pay the workers. He should begin with those who were hired last and end with those who were hired first.

First the foreman paid those who had worked only an hour. He gave them a full day's pay. Then he paid those who worked for three hours. He gave them a full day's pay too.

Those who were hired first began to smile. They were sure they would receive more. After all, they had worked longer and harder than the others. It would only be fair, wouldn't it? But when they received their pay, their smiles turned to frowns. They got the same pay as everyone else!

"Wait!" they complained. "Those men worked only an hour. You made them equal to us. We did most of the work, and in the heat of the day, too."

"I'm not being unfair to you," said the landowner. "You agreed to work for the usual pay for a day's work. That's what I'm paying you. I can do what I want to with my money. Don't be jealous because I am generous."

And then Jesus said it again. "The last will be first, and the first will be last."

Do you think it's fair? You may not. And that's the point Jesus was making. God does not treat us the way we deserve. God treats us much, much better than that. It is His grace that saves all of us, those who accept Him at the last minute and those who accept Him early. God doesn't have to save any of us. He does it because He loves us.

Do you treat others in God's family the same way God has treated you? When someone is mean to you, do you treat them with love and kindness? Try to treat others as God treats us.



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, have an adult family member take you to a field or vineyard and read your lesson story together. Imagine that you are in the vineyard in your story, watching the workers.
- Read the memory verse in Acts 10:34, last part. Tell what it means. Make six cutouts of a cluster of grapes. Write one word from your memory verse on each. Write the reference on the last cluster cutout.
- Pray for people who work on farms.

Sunday

- During family worship read the lesson story in the Bible (Matthew 20:1-16).
- Make a list of some of your favorite things, such as toys, clothes, pictures. Put your most favorite item on top of the list, followed by your next favorite thing, etc. Now make a list of your friends. Put your favorite friend first, your next favorite friend next, etc. Does God have a "people list" like that?
- Pray for your friends.
- Arrange your memory verse cutouts in order. Then read or say the verse.

Monday

- For family worship, read John 13:35 together. Think of ways you can treat your family better. Draw a picture to show how. Put your picture where you can see it every day. Pray as a family that you will treat each other as God treats you.
- Arrange your memory verse cutouts in order. Then say the memory verse for your family.

Tuesday

- During family worship, think of ways you can treat people at school or church better. Plan how your

family can do these things. Read John 13:35 again.

- Say your memory verse together.
- Play, sing, hum, or listen to "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 139).

Wednesday

- With your family, read Romans 2:11. How should you treat those you don't know? What can you and your family do for someone you don't know? Remember, God treats everyone better than they deserve.
- Pray for opportunities to treat others kindly.
- Arrange your memory verse cutouts in the right order and say your memory verse out loud.

Thursday

- For family worship, serve grape juice to everyone in your family. While they drink, tell your lesson story in your own words.
- Read together Luke 23:39-43. Tell how Jesus treated one of the thieves who was crucified next to Him. How is this story like your lesson story?
- Say your memory verse from memory.
- Ask Jesus to help you not to play favorites.

Friday

- Make a clay model or draw a picture of three people you have a hard time loving. Why do you feel that way? Discuss your reasons with your family during worship. Pray together for power to treat others as Jesus would. Read John 15:12 together.
- Share your experiences this week in treating others well. How did you feel?
- Act out this week's Bible lesson. Or draw pictures and use them to tell the story to your family. Close by saying your memory verse.