

KIDS *of*  
INTEGRITY

**Gentleness**



Visit a petting zoo, play dress-up, melt chocolate and more! Here are loads of fun ideas that teach gentleness.

Sprinkle some of these activities throughout your week to help your kids:

- understand what gentleness looks like in action
- speak to others with sensitivity, tolerance and compassion
- play with others carefully, without causing harm
- treat belongings with respect.

This lesson also helps address (albeit indirectly) a critical or sarcastic attitude, and biting.

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## Parents' prayer

Whenever we guide our children toward greater integrity, it's like stepping into the spotlight: our own weaknesses are suddenly highlighted and our unabashed youngsters are quick to point them out. As you spend time in private prayer preparing for this lesson on gentleness, use the following prayer to help you fully embrace the opportunity to "tune up" in this area as well.

If you prefer to personalize your prayer, read through the additional verses provided under "Scripture-guided prayer" for direction and inspiration.

### Sample prayer

Abba Father, You tend Your flock like a gentle shepherd, gathering lambs in Your arms and carrying them close to Your heart (Isaiah 40:11). Jesus said, "I am gentle and humble in heart" and offers us rest for our souls (Matthew 11:29). Thank you for being our gentle Father and Master. Our sin is deserving of severe consequences, but You continually restore us with gentle prompting and unending grace.

Lord, I desire to have a gentle spirit, which is of great worth in Your sight (1 Peter 3:4). Please send Your Spirit to shape the inclinations of my heart to be kind and tender. In Your Word it says that if someone is caught in sin, those who are spiritual should restore him gently (Galatians 6:1). So often when I correct my children, it is not with gentleness. I humbly ask You to forgive me for being harsh and acknowledge my need for Your Spirit to live in me. Please remind me often of Your gentle grace and prompt me to offer Your love and forgiveness to others.

Jesus, as parents brought their children to You, so I bring \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ before You. Please put Your gentle hands on them and bless them with the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, especially in the area of gentleness. It is such an attractive quality in anyone – boys, girls, men and women! I pray that others would be drawn to You because my children share Your love and grace with others.

In the daily grind of life when someone treats \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ in a way that bothers

them, I ask that You will remind them that “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). At play, when my children interact with other children, help them, be gentle in their speech and actions. Satan is sure to tempt them to use their hands or words to hurt others, to be unforgiving or quick to point out fault in others. Please send Your Holy Spirit to work in my children’s lives, filling their hearts with Your love, prompting them to be gentle, gracious and tolerant with others.

Lord, I pray that our family will be a welcome contrast to the harsh and unforgiving world we live in. Please allow our gentleness to be evident to all whom we have contact with. Let us be gentle because we know You are near (Philippians 4:5). I ask that gentleness, among the other fruits of Your Spirit, will be reflected in our actions and in our communication, letting others know You are Lord of our hearts and our home. Amen.

### **Scripture-guided prayer for parents**

*Pray through one or more of the selected Scriptures under each heading. Focus on listening to God and allowing His Spirit to direct you as you pray.*

#### **Character focus**

Begin by letting God know how much you appreciate His gentleness and grace.

Isaiah 40:11 | Jonah 4:1-2,10-11 | Matthew 11:28-30 | Luke 13:34 | Galatians 5:22-23

#### **Heart search**

Acknowledge where and how you lack gentleness personally.

Proverbs 3:31-32 | Proverbs 15:1 | Galatians 5:24 - 6:1 | Ephesians 4:29-32 | Titus 3:1-2

#### **Gratitude**

Thank God for ways you have seen gentleness exhibited within your family.

#### **Family requests**

Ask God to help you and your family to be gentle in your thoughts and actions.

Luke 11:11-13 | Galatians 5:25 | Colossians 3:12-14 | Philippians 4:5 | James 3:17

## **Kids talk with God**

*Use this section to help your children request God’s help to grow in gentleness. The sample prayers all begin with “Dear God,” however, you may use any other names for God your children are comfortable with (i.e. Jesus, Father God, Lord Jesus, Heavenly Father, Abba Father, Lord). If your children are ready to formulate original prayers, you’ll find helpful verses in the “Scripture-guided prayer for children” section.*

### **Sample prayers**

Dear God, please help me to be a boy/girl who is gentle in the things I say and do. Amen.

Dear God, I need to talk to someone who has done wrong. Please help me to do it in a gentle way. Amen.

Dear God, when I am angry or upset, please help me to be gentle in the things I say and do instead of being harsh or mean. Amen.

Dear God, please tell me if there are ways I could be more gentle. Amen.

Dear God, please send Your Holy Spirit to help me to be gentle. Amen.

Dear God, Jesus was so gentle! Please help me to be like Him. Amen.

Dear God, I have been \_\_\_\_\_ instead of being gentle with my words/hands. Please forgive me and send Your Holy Spirit to help me be gentle. Amen.

### **Scripture-guided prayer for children**

*Read through one of the selected Scriptures under each heading and help your children pray based on the verse you read. Encourage them to listen to God and allow His Spirit to guide them as they pray.*

#### **Character focus**

Begin by telling God that you appreciate His gentleness and grace.

1 Kings 19:10-13 | Jonah 4:2 | Matthew 11:28-29

#### **Heart search**

Acknowledge when and how you are not gentle.

Proverbs 15:1 | 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 | Ephesians 4:29

## Gratitude

Thank God for ways you have been gentle.

## Personal requests

Ask God to help you, your siblings and your parents to be gentle in your thoughts and actions.

Ephesians 4:2 | Colossians 3:12 | Colossians 3:13-14

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## Speak a blessing

*Breaking old, sinful habits is hard work. But your enthusiastic affirmation will help your children find the determination they need to keep striving to be their best. Here are some ideas you can use to compliment your children as they grow in gentleness.*

- I know you are gentle, \_\_\_\_\_. You have such kind and tender hands.
  - I know you are gentle, \_\_\_\_\_, because you use such kind words.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is a gentle boy/girl.
  - Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_. We all appreciate it when you are gentle.
  - You have gentle hands, just like Jesus!
  - Gentleness is a quality I admire so much.
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## Memory verses

*Memorizing Scripture with your children helps God's Spirit bring about lasting change. Choose a verse that your children can learn in a pre-determined period of time. Aim to review the verse at least once every day.*

Psalm 141:3 "Set a guard over my mouth, Oh Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips."

Proverbs 3:31-32 "Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, for the Lord detests a perverse man but takes the upright into his confidence."

Proverbs 15:1 "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Proverbs 16:24 "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

Luke 6:31 "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

1 Corinthians 13:5 "[Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

Ephesians 4:2 "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Philippians 4:5 "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near."

Colossians 3:12-14 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Titus 3:1-2 "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men."

James 3:17 "But wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere."

1 John 3:18 "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth."

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## Kick-off craft

Just as a quilt is soothing and warm, this project will help your children remember to “wrap” their interactions with others in a warm, gentle attitude. For this kick-off craft, your children will earn one small fabric square for each gentle act. How quickly can your kids complete an entire “quilt”?

### Make a “gentleness quilt”

#### Directions

- 1 Begin by helping each of your children cut a rectangular shape from stiff cardboard. A cereal box works well if you use the neutral grey/brown side.
- 2 Next, help your children draw squares on the cardboard to form a “patchwork quilt.” You can make a more elaborate design if you wish, perhaps including a heart to represent love.
- 3 Write a memory verse of your choice on the cardboard backing.
- 4 Sort through your fabric supply or visit a store to find cloth for your quilt. As you choose materials, ask your children to select those that remind them of gentleness. This will likely be fabrics that are soft or silky. Be sure to have them touch some burlap and other scratchy types of cloth, too, so they can feel the difference. Choose a variety of colours and textures so that they can be arranged in a pattern.
- 5 Next, prepare the small squares of fabric that will be pasted on to the sketch of the quilt. Cut them into the same sizes and shapes that have been drawn on the cardboard.
- 6 To get the quilt started, allow your children to select one cloth square to paste on the cardboard. During the week, when you see your children being gentle, reward them with a square to add to their quilt. Practice saying the memory verse each time a square is added.

#### Other ideas

If you are skilled with a sewing machine, you may want to work with your children to make a real quilt they can keep and use for a doll or a stuffed animal.

## Bible stories

This section provides a collection of stories with the theme of gentleness, along with questions you can use to guide family discussions. Choose one or more stories that are appropriate for your children.

Before reading aloud, take a few minutes to review the story. If the Bible passage is too complex for your children, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

### A harsh king and a gentle king

Read 1 Kings 12:12-17, Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 11:28-30.

#### Questions for discussion

1. Did Rehoboam sound like nice king?
2. Did the people want to serve him?
3. If you were a king, what kind of king would you be?
4. What kind of a king is Jesus?
5. Can you think of someone whom you just love to be with? Who is it?
6. What is it that makes them nice to be around?
7. What do you think Jesus was like when He lived on earth in a human body? Do you think He would have had a mean voice or a gentle voice? Do you think that He would have had kind and gentle hands?
8. Do you think that He would have liked kids or do you think that He disliked being around kids?
9. When Jesus lived on earth He told the people He was gentle and humble. Why do you think Jesus said this?
10. Have you told Jesus you would like Him to be the king in your life?

#### Key concepts

Rehoboam was a harsh and cruel king. The Israelites, also known as Jews, had become used to living under

the authority of harsh kings or rulers. In fact, at the time that Zechariah lived, the Jewish people had just been released from living in slavery in Babylon and had been allowed to go back to Jerusalem.

Zechariah encouraged the people by telling them that they could look forward to the coming of another king. He told them the coming king would bring salvation, and righteousness. He also said the new king would be gentle and come to them riding on a donkey. He was talking about Jesus.

When Jesus did come, the Jews were still waiting for their “Messiah” or “Saviour.” They were expecting an earthly king, but God sent a heavenly king. Jesus told the people He was gentle and humble and that He would carry their burdens and give them a light “yoke.” He was reminding them that He would not be a harsh and cruel ruler, but a kind and gentle leader. Jesus came to save the Jewish people from their sins and He came to do that for us, too.

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### **A gentle shepherd**

Read Psalm 23:1-3, Isaiah 40:11 and Hebrews 12:1-11.

### **Questions for discussion**

1. How do shepherds care for their sheep?
2. If a sheep wanted to stand in the middle of the road where it might get hit by a truck, what do you think the shepherd would do?
3. Where do shepherds take their sheep?
4. What kind of shepherd does the Bible say Jesus is?
5. Why do you think a shepherd would discipline a sheep that always wandered off?
6. How does Jesus lead us?
7. What kinds of things do your parents have you do that are “good for you,” but not necessarily enjoyable?

### **Key concepts**

The Bible compares Jesus to a shepherd. The description in Isaiah refers to Him as leading gently

and carrying lambs close to His heart. He is a loving shepherd. Psalm 23 describes how shepherds take their sheep to green pastures where there are quiet waters. It also says that Jesus guides the sheep, meaning us, in “paths of righteousness.” This means that when we follow Jesus, He will lead us to do what is right.

God gives children parents for the same reason that sheep need shepherds. As a shepherd guides sheep to safe places to eat and drink, parents guide their children in life and in following God in righteousness. Children may not enjoy eating vegetables or obeying all of the rules their parents give them, but these things are for their benefit. Ultimately, God is our Heavenly Father who cares for parents and children, and disciplines everyone as He sees best. As sheep trust their shepherds, we can completely trust God.

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### **Jesus is gentle**

Read John 8:1-11 and Galatians 6:1.

### **Questions for discussion**

1. What was the punishment for someone who was caught in adultery? (*You might want to explain the woman’s adultery as “giving her heart to another man, even though she already had a husband.”*)
2. Why did the Pharisees bring the woman to Jesus?
3. What did Jesus say and do?
4. Was this a gentle or harsh way to point out to her that she had sinned?
5. Would she have learned to love Jesus if He had thrown stones at her?
6. What did Jesus tell the woman to do?
7. What are we to do when we “catch” other people sinning?

### **Key concepts**

The Old Testament law said that a man or woman who gave their love and attention to someone who was not their wife or husband should be stoned to

death. The Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus who had sinned in this way. They wanted to try and trap Jesus so they would have a reason to accuse Him of wrongdoing. Instead of telling them to stone her, Jesus began writing on the ground. Then Jesus said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7).

People began to leave, one by one. Finally, only Jesus and the woman were left. Jesus didn't throw any stones at her, but He did tell her to leave her life of sin. We can follow Jesus' example by gently correcting those who do wrong and offering them forgiveness.

### **Gentleness is contagious**

Read Ephesians 4:2-3, Proverbs 22:24-25 and Luke 6:31.

#### **Questions for discussion**

1. How would you describe a peaceful home?
2. When someone corrects you harshly, how do you feel?
3. Can you think of ways that children boss each other around?
4. How do you feel when someone tattles every time that you do something wrong?
5. How do most people act when other people are harsh with them?
6. Can you think of someone who is gentle?
7. How do most people act when other people are gentle and kind to them?

#### **Key concepts**

We often begin to treat others the same way that they treat us. The Bible says we are not to make friends with a hot-tempered person or we will learn to act like them. It also says we are not to envy a violent man or choose to act like him because God is not happy when people are violent.

God's basic instructions on how to treat people are found in the Bible. Jesus tells us we are to love others

as we love ourselves and we are to treat others the way you would like to be treated (Matthew 22:39, Luke 6:31). It is much more pleasant to be with friends and family members who are gentle and gracious than those who are harsh and unforgiving.

### **Salty owies**

Read Colossians 3:12, Proverbs 16:21 and Ephesians 4:15-16.

#### **Questions for discussion**

1. Would you prefer to eat a spoonful of sugar or a spoonful of salt?
2. What does it feel like when you get salt on a cut or a scratch?
3. How does it feel when you have done something wrong and someone corrects you harshly?
4. How does the Bible say we should speak to each other?
5. Is it easy to be gentle and loving to others all of the time?
6. Who can help us?

#### **Key concepts**

When we correct people harshly, it can make them feel worse than they already do, just like it stings when you get salt in a cut. When a person has done something wrong, they usually know it. It makes that person feel bad when another person corrects them aggressively, instead of gently.

The Bible says that we are to correct those who are caught sinning gently and to speak the truth in love. We can do this by praying before we talk to people about their wrongdoing. When we have God's love in our hearts, we will find it easier to be gentle, kind, patient and humble when we talk to those who have hurt us or done wrong.

*Have your children pray a prayer from the **kids talk with God** section, or have them come up with their own prayers requesting the Holy Spirit's help in developing a gentle attitude.*

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## Gentle words are “God’s bandages”

Read Proverbs 15:1, Proverbs 16:24 and Proverbs 12:18.

### Questions for discussion

1. What are some examples of how people speak harshly to you?
2. When someone speaks to you unkindly, how do you feel?
3. What does the Bible say about people who speak angrily?
4. How does the Bible say you should respond to those who speak in anger?
5. How do you imagine it would feel if you were pierced with a sword?
6. What are reckless words?
7. How does God want us to talk to each other?
8. How can words be like adhesive bandages?

### Key concepts

*Use your discussion time to talk respectfully about people who have spoken harshly to your children.*

*Possible examples include children who speak unkindly during playtime and neighbours who yell at children.*

*Emphasize the following ideas during your discussion:*

The Bible tells us that we accomplish more by responding to those who are cruel or angry with gentleness. When people lash out and say hurtful things, it is often because they have pain in their hearts. God wants us to be people who say kind things that will help “heal” the hurt in others. Kind words are like “God’s bandages” for people who have “bleeding hearts.”

- Pray with your children and ask God to help all of you show His love to hurting people by speaking words of encouragement.

*Note: The “take 1; take 2; take 3!” exercise in the hands-on options section is a good complement to this discussion.*

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## Creative discipline

*Your loving correction does not represent a “failure” – it’s essential to the learning process. Use these ideas to help your children recognize situations that call for greater gentleness.*

### Biblical basis

This discipline is based on the concept of “working off a debt” as described in Exodus 21:18-19. In the law given in this passage, if a man injured another man, he was required to pay the injured man for his lost time. If the injured man could not return to work, the man who injured him was required to pay his wages until he was healed.

### Suggested disciplinary action

You can put this Old Testament version of workers’ compensation into action in your home! Here’s how. When one of your children hurts a sibling physically or emotionally, explain that you will lose work time while you are comforting and caring for the injured child. Therefore, the disciplinary action will involve helping you to catch up with the work that he/she has caused you to get behind on.

The choice of “work” is up to your discretion. Appropriate tasks may be folding clothes, tidying away toys, vacuuming, clearing dishes, taking out or collecting garbage, or washing walls and windows. (Although you may actually “waste” even more time while supervising this “work,” it is worth it.)

When you think the child has “worked” long enough, say something like, “I think you have helped me catch up on the work that I didn’t get to because I was attending to your brother/sister. Let’s pray together, then you can go back to playing.”

### Affirmation

Reassure your child that you believe that they will soon be an expert at showing real love, according to 1 John 3:18, which states: “**Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.**” Pray with your child, using a **kids talk with God** sample prayer.

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## Hands-on options

Since most of these suggestions require minimal preparation, try them in the car, at the park or wherever you happen to be – reinforcing the idea that gentleness is important whenever and wherever we are.

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### Take one; take two; take three!

*drama / role play*

Role-playing is fun and can enrich your children's learning experience. To practice what you have learned about gentleness, create scenarios featuring people speaking harshly to your children. Scenarios that may be familiar to your children might include a grouchy neighbour who sometimes yells at your kids to get off the grass, a bully who breaks a sandcastle or a name caller.

Have your children practice responding to these "attacks" with gentle answers. Try different "takes" acting out what might happen if the child responds inappropriately. In "take one," for example, your child might respond to an attack with anger. Then, in "take two," they could show a gentle and calm response.

Have your children watch their own expressions in a hand-held mirror, or record your session with a movie camera for even more entertainment.

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### Take your crew to a petting zoo

*physical activity*

A great way to practice gentleness is to visit a petting zoo or a pet store where you can practice "hands on" gentleness. Prior to touching the animals, explain that animals are like people in that they don't like to be around people who are loud, aggressive or mean. Ask your children to observe the way animals respond when they are handled gently. Refer to Proverbs 12:10 (below) and explain that every animal needs to be treated with gentleness.

#### Questions for discussion

- Did the animals like you?
- Did any of them seem scared?
- Why do you think that the \_\_\_\_\_ enjoyed being petted?

- What did the fur feel like?
- Which fruit of the Spirit does soft fur remind you of?

#### Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 12:10 "A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but even the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel."

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

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### Mr. North Wind

*any time*

To reinforce your lessons on gentleness, ask your children to close their eyes and use their imaginations as you describe two contrasting weather situations. Here are some sample descriptions:

*Think of the coldest winter day you can imagine. The wind is blowing hard, carrying sharp ice crystals and snowflakes that sting as they cut into your cheeks. Now think of a mild, spring day. The sun is shining. There is just a gentle breeze blowing, barely strong enough to lift your hair. It touches your face softly.*

#### Questions for discussion

- What does it feel like to be outside on a stormy winter day?
- What does it feel like to be outside on a warm summer day?
- How are people like harsh winter days?
- How are people like warm spring days?
- What kind of person would you like to have for a friend or family member?
- What kind of person would you like to be?

## **A gentleness story personalized**

*drive time*

While you're driving, or during a quiet moment at home, tell a story that emphasizes the value of treating others gently. Use the plot below, or invent a similar one of your own. Feature a character and a special stuffed animal your children will relate to.

*When Jordan's grandma returned from a holiday in Texas, she brought him a special stuffed animal – one that resembled a wolf. Jordan had never seen such a wonderful stuffie. He loved wolves, and although he had other toy animals, Jordan had never had one that looked like a wolf.*

*Jordan named his new stuffie "Wolfie." He took Wolfie to bed with him every night and felt safe when he cuddled Wolfie.*

*At first, Jordan was gentle with Wolfie, but soon he started treating his new stuffie roughly. If his mom or dad did not read him an extra bedtime story, or if he had to go to bed early, he would throw Wolfie to the floor. "Don't do that," Jordan's parents cautioned, "or Wolfie will get hurt." But Jordan didn't listen. Sometimes, when he was feeling frustrated, Jordan would even punch or hit Wolfie.*

*One day, Jordan had a fight with his sister. While he was still feeling very angry, he went to his room and kicked Wolfie against the wall. But as Wolfie fell to the floor, Jordan noticed a large tear in Wolfie's side. Wolfie's stuffing was even starting to fall out.*

*Jordan called, "Mommy, I've hurt Wolfie! Come quickly!" Jordan's mother came running. When she got to his room, she found Jordan holding Wolfie and crying. She hugged Jordan and said that she would help him try to fix Wolfie.*

*Together they picked up the stuffing and pushed it back into the large hole in Wolfie's side. Wolfie looked a little better, but he was still lumpy and torn. Jordan's mom got out her sewing machine and did her best to fix the tear.*

*When she was done, Wolfie looked like himself again, but he had a large scar down his side where*

*Jordan had kicked him. Although the hole had been fixed, it was still obvious that the fabric had once been torn.*

*Jordan loved Wolfie as much as ever and took care to be gentle with Wolfie. Every day, when he saw the scar on his special stuffie's side, he remembered how important it was to be gentle with his toys and his friends. He didn't want to cause anymore scars.*

The essential truth you'll want to share with your children is that toys can be repaired or replaced, but when we hurt people, we can't fix the hurt as easily. When we hurt others through using unkind words or rough actions, we can't see the pain we have caused in a person's heart.

### **Questions for discussion**

- Do you ever hit stuffed toys?
- Are you ever rough with your toys?
- Have you ever hit a person?
- Did you know that hitting can really hurt people and toys?
- Do you ever speak unkindly to your toys?
- Do you ever say mean things to your friends or brothers and sisters?
- How do you think God wants us to treat each other?

### **Relevant Scripture**

Colossians 3:12-14 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

### **Sweets for the sweet**

*fun with food*

To celebrate what your child has learned about gentleness in speech, surprise your children with

small candies or other sweet treats when they speak gently. Double the reward if they have responded with gentleness to harsh words or someone's negative attitude.

### Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 15:1 "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Proverbs 16:24 "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

### Dressing up in God's clothes

*drama / role play*

Begin by reading through Colossians 3:12, Galatians 5:22-23 and/or Ephesians 4:2 (see below).

Next, open your closet or dress-up box, and with the help of your children, select items to represent the character traits God says we are to clothe ourselves with: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, self-control, joy, goodness, peace, love and faithfulness. Scarves and accessories work well as you can combine them to make an "outfit."

As you have fun dressing up in "God's clothes," role-play various life situations where you respond according to the character traits you are wearing. Example scenarios could include:

- a family running late for an appointment,
- two children wanting to play with the same toy,
- a parent correcting a child who is blowing through a straw and making a mess,
- a child who is teasing another child.

### Relevant Scripture

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

Ephesians 4:2 "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

Colossians 3:12-14 "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

### Tone and expression matter

*drive time or any time*

This game works well while driving in the car. Speak a phrase and have your kids tell you if your tone is harsh or gentle. For example, say "Please stop doing that," in a variety of ways. Let your kids give you feedback on whether or not they would like to be spoken to that way.

Let the game lead into a discussion about tone of voice and how people are more willing to listen when we speak gently.

### Questions for discussion

Use the following questions to help your children think about they should aim to speak to others:

- How would you like me to ask you to put away your toys?
- How should a parent tell a child that it is time to go home when the child is having fun visiting at a friend's house?
- What should you say when you want a treat and I don't give you one?

### Relevant Scripture

Proverbs 16:24 "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."

Proverbs 16:21 "The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction."

### Gentle heating

*science with a twist*

In this lesson, kids will change solids to liquids to learn about the importance of allowing God to shape a gentle attitude in their heart.

You will need solid chocolate, a teaspoon of salt, aluminum foil, scissors, a desk lamp and a stir stick such as a wooden skewer or a drinking straw.

## Directions

- 1 Cut two squares of tin foil approximately 10 cm wide. Fold the edges up on all sides, pinching the corners to make two small square dishes.
- 2 Put some chocolate into one foil dish; put the salt into the other dish.
- 3 As the adult supervising the experiment, you need to adjust the lamp until it is about 2 cm above the boxes. Turn the lamp on.
- 4 While you are watching and waiting, tell a story about gentleness or review a story from the **Bible stories** section of this lesson. After five minutes, turn the lamp off and put it aside so no one will accidentally get burned.
- 5 Use the stir stick to see if there have been any changes in the substances. As you stir the chocolate, mould it into a heart shape. Try to do the same with the salt.
- 6 Tell your children that after it has cooled, they can taste your experiment. As the substances cool, read Zechariah 7:11-12, Hebrews 3:7-10 and Luke 6:45 (see below).
- 7 Prior to sampling the substances, explain to your children that when we refuse to allow God to soften our hearts and put His love in them, we are like the salt that was not changed by God's Holy Spirit (represented by the lamp). But when we listen to God's directions in the Bible and allow Him to put His love in our hearts, we are like the chocolate. God softens our hearts with His love, and we are kind and gentle with our words and actions.
- 8 Sample the substances, then pray, asking God to send His Holy Spirit to put His love in your hearts and to help you to speak with words that are sweet like the chocolate.

## Relevant Scripture

Zechariah 7:11-12 “But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the Lord Almighty was very angry.”

Hebrews 3:7-10 “So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried Me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, “Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known My ways.”’ ”

Luke 6:45 “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”

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## Warm fuzzies and cold pricklies scavenger hunt

### getting into nature

Going outside for a walk is even more fun when you're searching for “warm fuzzies” and “cold pricklies”! Warm fuzzies are items that might be lifted by a very gentle breeze, such as dandelion fluff, small seeds and feathers. Have your children collect some examples and put them in a zippered plastic bag marked “warm fuzzies.” In another bag, marked “cold pricklies,” gather collected items that only a strong wind could move, such as sticks and small rocks.

After the objects have been collected, have your children sit down on a blanket, or take your items indoors. Let your children take turns picking out an object and deciding what kind of words or actions would go along with each object – gentle and kind, or cruel and harsh. For example, a child might take out some dandelion fluff and say, “This dandelion fluff reminds me of a hug.” Someone else might take out a rock and say, this reminds me of someone saying, “I really wish you weren't my brother.”

After everyone has had a chance to share their ideas, the objects can be put into a bowl to serve as a “warm fuzzies and cold pricklies centrepiece” for the kitchen table.

Summarize the lesson by explaining that when we are gentle in our words and actions, we are less likely to hurt others and much more pleasant for others to be around.

Read the verses below and pray together, asking God to fill your home with warm fuzzies instead of cold pricklies. Later, if you notice your son or daughter using harsh words or actions, ask him/her if he/she is throwing rocks or pussy willows, or similar items collected on your scavenger hunt.

### **Relevant Scripture**

Psalm 19:14 “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11 “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

Proverbs 3:31-32 “Do not envy a violent man or choose any of his ways, for the Lord detests a perverse man, but takes the upright into His confidence.”

*Note: The original story that introduced the now popular terms “warm fuzzies” and “cold pricklies” was written by Claude Steiner. Before reading this story to your children, however, be aware that it does involve a wicked witch.*

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### **Recommended resources**

For a list of children’s stories that reinforce the theme of this lesson, consult the home page for the **gentleness** lesson at [Kidsofintegrity.com](http://Kidsofintegrity.com).

# Planning card for gentleness

point form

## God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I speak with gentleness
- I am gentle and kind in my actions

## My way

When I am tempted to:

- speak harshly or unkindly
- treat others roughly

**And God is pleased!**

**I know that I need to go to God for help.**

**This week, we will focus on learning about gentleness by:**

**Date complete:**

**Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse**

**Memory verse:**

# Planning card for gentleness

calendar form

## God's way

I am demonstrating godly character when:

- I speak with gentleness
- I am gentle and kind in my actions

## My way

When I am tempted to:

- speak harshly or unkindly
- treat others roughly

**And God is pleased!**

**I know that I need to go to God for help.**

*This week, we will focus on learning about gentleness by:*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

**Daily reminders: PRAY! | Speak words of blessing and affirmation | Review memory verse**

**Memory verse:**