

# Model Sunday School Lesson

## Rationale:

## What is Said:

Preparing your room reduces your anxiety which allows you to be your best when the students arrive. When you “wing it” students internalize your lack of preparation as lack of concern for them.

Prayer is vital! You are a model to your students. They should see you placing a high value on prayer.

Humans have a strong desire to be noticed and appreciated. Welcoming each student not only sets the right tone for the morning, but it also sends the message that you care enough about them that you take time to greet them by name. (If you don't know their name, glance down quickly at their name tag without them seeing.) Greeting students by name is much more personal than just saying hello.

### Preparing the Room

[The third grade teacher in this model lesson arrives to her classroom 15 minutes before the service begins to start setting up her room. She lays out all the materials she will need for the craft and brings in objects from the story to create some interest. She writes the memory verse on the board and has her Bible open to the passage that she will be teaching from.]

### Staff Prayer

[The teacher meets 10 minutes before class with other Sunday School teachers to pray for her students and to ask for the Lord's blessing on the morning. Any remaining time is spent preparing the room.]

### A Warm Welcome

[The teacher begins to greet students, who are wearing nametags, as they walk through the door. She is standing at the door as students walk in.]

“Good morning John. I'm glad you made it today.”

“Hi Susie. We missed you last week. I hope everything is alright.”

“Is that a new dress Laura? It sure looks nice!”

“Welcome to Sunday School, Joe. My name is Mrs. Olsen. I'll be your teacher this morning.”

“Hi Steve! Thanks for remembering to walk into class. You remembered from last week.”

“Hey, Julio! How are you this morning?”

“Hi Jackie. You must be new. I'm Mrs. Olsen. I'm glad you're here today.”

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## Rationale:

You are politely telling all students what you expect from them.

Scanning the room with your eyes lets the students know that you are fully aware of what is going on at all times.

Having a signal is an important tool for getting the class's attention quickly. The one on the right works well. When you do the signal, make sure everyone freezes their bodies, their voices, and gives you their full attention. If you need to, practice the signal a couple of times each week. Use the signal right before giving instructions to the entire class or when you are transitioning to another activity.

Scanning the room a second time tells the class, "She really does mean business. We should freeze."

## What is Said:

### Starting Out Right

"Thank you all for coming in so quietly this morning. I appreciate that. Please find a seat and then we'll get started."

[The teacher scans the room with her eyes several times for students who are doing as she asked.]

"John is sitting quietly at his seat with his hands folded. Thank you."

"A big thank you to Susie for quickly finding her seat. Susie also remembered to fold her hands to show me that she's ready."

[Once the students are seated, the teacher signals that she needs the classes' attention by counting down with her fingers from the number three.]

"Eyes up here in please in three, two, and one."



[Teacher scans the room with her eyes as if to say, "I'm making sure everyone is looking at me while their bodies are still."]

"I see Steve's body and voice are frozen and he's looking at me. Thank you, Steve!"

[Teacher scans the room again to make sure all students are "frozen" and looking at her.]

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## Rationale:

Using the two new students as a guise, the teacher reviews three simple rules: Freeze when she counts down, listen to the person who is talking, and raise a hand before speaking. It takes only a moment to review, but is well worth the time.

Students need to see prayer modeled by you. By including their prayer requests, you value their concerns and reinforce that God is capable of answering prayer.

Taking just a few short minutes to review a lesson can increase retention up to 50%. Second, it helps students see how the stories are connected from week to week. Finally, it helps level the playing field for students who were absent the previous week.

## What is Said:

### Reviewing Expectations

“Now that I have everyone’s attention, I’d like to quickly review the rules for Jackie and Joe since they’re new. You already know to freeze your bodies and your voices when I count down from three.”

“Who remembers the rule about talking? ...Susie has her hand up quietly.”

[The teacher picks Susie who reminds the students that only one person talks at a time.]

“Thanks, Susie. You remembered my rule that ‘*if I’m talking, you listen and if you’re talking, I listen. One person talks at a time.*’ That way everyone is heard. If you would like to speak, please raise your hand and wait for me to call on you.”

### Prayer

“Let’s ask God to bless our time together as we learn today about loving our neighbors.”

“Are there any other prayer requests?”

[Students share their prayer requests with the teacher. The teacher prays aloud with the students.]

### Reviewing Last Week’s Story

[The teacher points to the color picture on the bulletin board from last week’s story.]

“Who can tell Jackie and Joe what we learned about last week? Let’s see....John has his hand up quietly. John, would you share with them?”

[John shares what he remembers. The teacher calls on other students to *briefly* fill in missing parts. She also adds her “two cents” to finish the review.]

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## Rationale:

Bringing in objects from the story and having them displayed always generates curiosity and interest no matter what age the students are. Students will begin predicting the story when they enter the room.

Having students predict what the story is about before you tell it keeps students engaged. They actively listen to find out if their predictions are accurate.

The teacher tries to involve Jackie, through questioning, to make her feel like she's part of the class.

The teacher does not confirm or refute any predictions. She simply acknowledges all responses.

The teacher makes sure both boys and girls have the opportunity to answer questions.

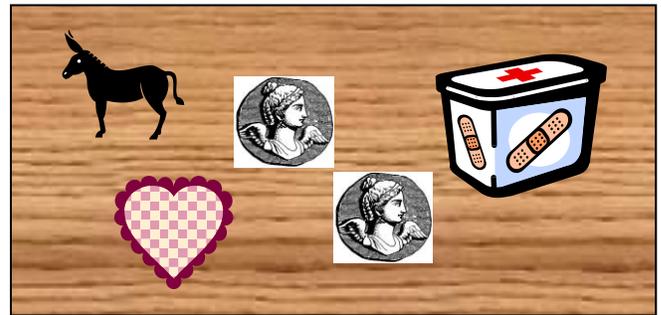
Here the teacher is reviewing her expectations by having a student pick someone who isn't calling out.

## What is Said:

"This week we will continue to talk about loving others. Thank you all for reviewing last week's story for Jackie and Joe."

### Creating Interest

[The following items are placed in the center of the table before students arrive: bandages, coins, a toy donkey, and a heart.]



"Can anyone guess what our story is about this morning as you look at these items on the table?"

[The teacher calls on a few students to guess what the story is about.]

"I see lots of hands raised quietly. It's so hard to choose. Let's see...how about Jackie."

[Jackie shares her guess.]

"Interesting, Jackie. You might be right. We'll have to wait until I share the Bible story to find out for sure. Anyone else have a guess? Jackie, would you choose the next person to guess; someone who was being a good listener while you shared?"

[Jackie picks another student who is raising his hand quietly. That student shares his thoughts.]

"You might be right John. Would you pick one more student to guess what this week's story might be about; someone who isn't calling out, but has her hand up quietly."

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## Rationale:

Here the teacher sums up what the students said and begins leading the discussion towards this week's story.

The teacher then uses questioning about love to help point out what the theme of the story is. This helps students make a personal connection to the story. Even though they may not already know the story, they do know about love.

Visuals are incredibly important when telling a Bible story (regardless of age). "A [Bible] picture is worth a thousand words."

We Remember:

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

**50% of what we hear and see**

70% of what we say

90% of what we say and do

- William Glasser

Just telling the Bible story without a picture or other visual aids reduces what students remember by 30%!

## What is Said:

[John picks the last student to share.]

"Susie has a good guess too. We'll see who guessed correctly in just a moment when I share this week's Bible story with you."

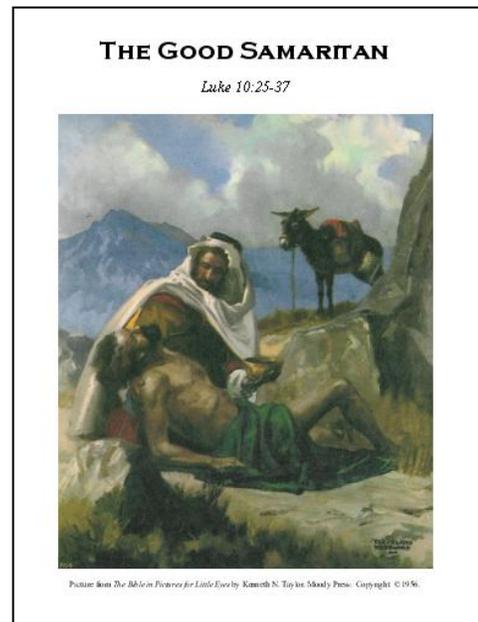
## Connecting to the Story

"All three of you talked about the heart and thought this week's story might be about love. Well...you're right!"

[The teacher asks the following questions and calls on a few students to answer.]

"Doesn't it feel good to be loved by others? What is one way your mom or dad shows love to you? How can your friends show you love? Do you think they would help you if you got hurt? Would an enemy help you if you were hurt?"

[Teacher holds up the color picture for this week's Bible story.]



"Today we are going to learn about *The Good Samaritan*. The story of *The Good Samaritan* will teach us that we should love others; even if they are our enemies. The Samaritan in this story

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## Rationale:

Reading a Bible story is fairly easy. *Telling* a Bible story is much more difficult. For children in third grade and under, it is recommended that you *tell* the Bible story. This means that you must know the story inside and out. You would still hold your Bible open while telling the story. This helps students realize that you aren't making it up; it comes from the Bible. Avoid adding extra details that might change the meaning of the story. You can, however, talk about how life might have been at the time the story was written. Bible commentaries are useful for this purpose.

Students in fourth grade and above should *read* (or follow along as you read) the story from the Bible. You would still stop every few verses to explain what is going on in language that they would understand.

Regardless of the age group, show enthusiasm as you tell/read the story. No one enjoys a story told/read in a monotone voice.

Questioning students throughout the story helps keep them actively engaged in the lesson. Think about long lectures you've heard with no interactions whatsoever. Your mind begins to wander.

## What is Said:

showed love for a Jew even though Jews and Samaritans did not get along. Do you see the Samaritan helping the man?"

## Telling the Story

[The teacher opens up her Bible to Luke 10:25]

"Today's story comes from the book of Luke. The book of Luke is found in the New Testament. The New Testament is about the life of Jesus and the early church."

[With expression, the teacher reads the story from her Bible and stops every few verses to explain the verses in language that the students would understand. She has chosen to read the story from the New International Version (NIV) because it uses language that is understandable to children. If this teacher were to teach younger students, she would still hold open her Bible and *tell* the story instead of reading it. **Students must see that the story comes from the Bible**, so it is important to use the Bible to tell the story. For really young children, however, a Bible storybook would be appropriate. Student in 4<sup>th</sup> grade or higher could follow along in their own Bibles or from a class set of Bibles.]

<sup>25</sup> *On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

<sup>26</sup> *"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"*

<sup>27</sup> *He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself."*

"What do think loving your neighbor means?"

[The teacher accepts responses]

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*Rationale:*

*What is Said:*

Stopping to explain the passage or providing historical information helps keep the students' interest.

<sup>28</sup>“*You have answered correctly,*” Jesus replied. “*Do this and you will live.*”

<sup>29</sup>But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “*And who is my neighbor?*”

<sup>30</sup>In reply Jesus said: “*A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,*

“The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho was about 17 miles. Could you imagine traveling that far?”

*when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.* <sup>31</sup>A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

“Neither the priest or the Levite stopped to help the man. It was a Samaritan who helped the man. Back in Bible times Jews and Samaritans did not get along at all. So, for the Samaritan to stop showed a tremendous amount of love. He could have walked by like the other two men and no one would have thought anything of it. But, he didn't.”

By stopping instruction *whenever* you hear a competing voice you are saying to the students, ‘*I expect everyone to listen and be respectful. I will wait until you're ready to listen.*’ Students don't usually like it when everyone is staring and waiting for the behavior to stop. Most of the time, stopping and staring will be enough to remind students to listen.

[John begins talking to his neighbor while the teacher is talking. The teacher stops teaching, in mid-sentence, and stares directly at John until he stops talking and looks at her. She then continues teaching. Anytime a student is talking, she stops and stares. If the same student begins talking again, the teacher moves the student to another spot in the room away from the other students. If the student continues to be disruptive, he/she is asked to speak with the teacher outside. (The

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## Rationale:

Asking the student why he/she was sent outside helps the student “own” the problem. Students will often say that they don’t know why they were sent out. 90% of the time they do know, but they don’t want to acknowledge their error.

Students should always know why they are being disciplined. The student in this example says he does not know why he is outside. Whether he knows or not, you should tell him.

Giving students the opportunity to return to class when they are ready helps students “own” their behavior. The ticket back into class is good behavior. Isn’t that what we want? This empowers students to correct their behavior and come back into class sooner than if you set a time limit.

The teacher “checks” on the student to give the student a chance to “own” his behavior and provides the student with an opportunity to return to class. The student must say why he was asked to sit outside to be allowed back in. The purpose of separating him from the group is to stop the behavior.

## What is Said:

following dialogue would occur if the student is asked to speak with the teacher outside.))

“John, why do you think I asked to speak with you outside?”

[John says he doesn’t know.]

“I asked to speak with you outside because you kept talking while I was talking. Do you remember our rule? *‘If you’re talking, I listen, and if I’m talking you listen. One person talks at a time’*. I would like you to sit out here until you feel you are ready to come back inside and listen. You decide when you’re ready.”

[If this step is not consistent with your church’s discipline plan, please follow their procedures.]

[The teacher leaves the student to sit outside with the door open so that she can still see him at all times. She resumes instruction. Usually the student will come back in the classroom within a couple of minutes. If the child is still sitting outside after a few minutes, the teacher would come outside to talk again.]

“John, do you know why I sent you out here to think?”

[John says why he is sitting outside.]

“Are you ready to come inside and listen carefully?”

[John says, yes and comes back into the classroom. (If John said no, simply say, “You’re welcome to come back into class when you think you are ready.”)]

[The teacher walks back into class and continues to teach.]

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*Rationale:*

*What is Said:*

<sup>34</sup> *He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him.* <sup>35</sup> *The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

<sup>36</sup> *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"*

<sup>37</sup> *The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."*

"Jesus was teaching the expert in the law that our neighbor isn't just the person who lives next door to us. It can be someone down the street, in another state, or in another country. In this story, the "neighbor" was a man in need."

"Can you think of someone you know who you could show love toward? It might be someone who you don't even like. The Bible tells us that we should love our enemies. Do you have someone in mind? Without saying that person's name aloud, let's bow our heads and pray that we would show love to those people this week."

[The students pray.]

## Review

"In this week's story we learned that:

- Our "neighbor" is anyone
- The Samaritan showed love toward a Jewish man when his own people would not
- We should love others even if they are our enemies"

Here, the teacher is summing up the theme of the story in terms that the students can understand.

By questioning the students, the teacher is challenging them to apply the message of the story to their own lives.

Remember: Reviewing a lesson increases retention by up to 50%. Review two key facts from the story and one way in which students can apply the story to their own lives. Keep it simple.

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## Rationale:

Now students are confirming or rejecting their original predictions about the story by looking at the items that the teacher brought in to tell the story with. This is also a sneaky way of reviewing the story again.

Students love having the power of choice. Let them choose the next person to answer a question. Also, notice that the teacher is reviewing her expectations to the class while balancing responses from boys and girls.

The teacher always acknowledges student responses in a positive way. Even if the student's response is incorrect but, the teacher can say something like, "Not exactly, but you're close. Thank you for trying!"

Effective teachers can move smoothly from one activity to another. Think about how newscasters move from one topic to another. For example: *"It will be raining cats and dogs for about three days. Speaking of dogs, pet owners are spending more and more money on their dogs than ever before..."*

A sample of the craft helps students see what is expected of them. Teachers should make a sample before class. This will help teachers remember to gather the appropriate materials and inform them of any challenges the craft may pose.

## What is Said:

"Let's take a look at the items I brought in this morning. Before the story I asked you to guess what the story might be about as you looked at these items. Can anyone tell me why I brought each item?"

"I'm looking for someone who has his hand up quietly. John, thank you for raising your hand quietly. Why did I bring in these items?"

[John gives his response.]

"Very good, Rick. Would you choose one other girl who was doing a great job listening to tell us what she thinks?"

[John picks a girl who is quietly raising her hand to share.]

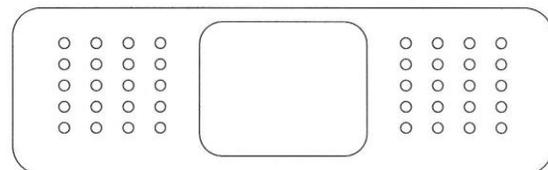
"Thank you Susie. I think both you and John did a great job listening to the story."

## Transition

"Since we just heard a story about the Samaritan helping his 'neighbor' by bandaging his wounds and caring for him, I thought it would be fun to make our own bandage to help us remember the story."

## Craft

[The teacher holds up a completed sample of the project.]



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## Rationale:

Craft materials are not placed in reach of the students until after instructions have been given.

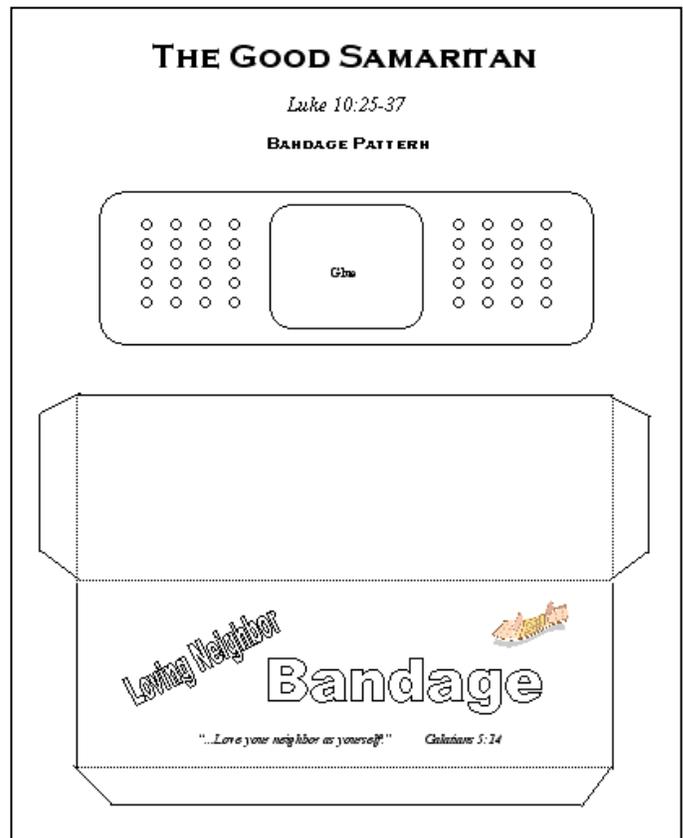
Remember: "An instruction unheard is an instruction not given".



## What is Said:

"I have set out all of the materials you will need to make a bandage of your own. Notice that I placed them in the center of the table. We're not going to touch them yet. First, let me explain how we're going to make our craft. Please fold your hands and look up here as I explain."

[The teacher explains all necessary directions before allowing her students to begin. All the materials are in front of the students, but the students are not touching them.]



Students love when you recognize their hard work. Even if the craft is not coming out the way you thought it should, you can always say something like, "I appreciate how hard you're trying." Keep your comments positive.



"Now you may begin working on your bandages. If you have a question, please raise your hand and wait for me to call on you."

[Students begin coloring their bandages as the teacher walks around the room complimenting students for following directions, sharing, doing nice work, etc.]

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## Rationale:

This teacher is making a point to praise John for his good behavior to encourage him to continue to do the right thing. You'll recall that John was sent out of the room earlier. The teacher chooses not to treat him poorly for his actions earlier. Instead, she praises him for the behaviors she would like to see. This tells John that the teacher doesn't dislike him, she just dislikes some of his actions. There's a HUGE difference. When students feel like the teacher dislikes them, their behavior gets worse. In this example, John knows that the teacher is not upset at him; she just wants him to do the right thing. Imagine if Jesus held one mistake against us and never let us forget about it! Let's not do that to our students.

The craft is designed to help students remember what the story was about. By discussing the story during the craft, you are increasing the students' chances of remembering the story (possibly up to 90%).

Once again, we remember:

10% of what we read  
20% of what we hear  
30% of what we see  
50% of what we hear and see  
70% of what we say  
**90% of what we say and do**

## What is Said:

"I like the way John is sharing his crayons with Jackie. Thanks, John!"

"Look at Julio's bandage! I love how he colors inside the lines."

[Once students are well into making their craft, the teacher will begin using this time to help students connect the craft to the story.]

"Steve, why do you think we are making bandages today?"

[Steve says that they are making bandages because the Samaritan took care of the man who was beaten up.]

"Great job, Steve! This story has taught us that we should show love for others. It doesn't matter what skin color they have, how old they are, or whether or not they like us. The Bible tells us to love our neighbor. We learned that our neighbor can be anyone."

## Transition

"While a few of you are finishing up your bandages, the rest of us will begin learning our memory verse for the week."

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## Rationale:

Generally, the memory verse for each story is chosen to highlight the theme of the story. Taking the time to discuss the verse will enhance the students' understanding of the theme of the story.



Students say the verse aloud. When they get to the blank line, they say the missing word.



## What is Said:

### Memory Verse

[Before class, the teacher printed the memory verse on the board.]

*The entire law is summed up  
in a single command: Love  
your neighbor as yourself.  
Galatians 5:14*

“Let’s read the verse together aloud. *‘The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself. Galatians 5:14’*”

“What do you think this verse means?”

[The teacher elicits responses from the students. A few students share aloud.]

“Excellent! You’re right. If we love others, we are following God’s law. Now let’s read the verse together aloud again as I point to each word.”

*The entire law is summed up  
in a single command: \_\_\_\_\_  
your neighbor as yourself.  
Galatians 5:14*

“Now, I am going to erase one word and draw a line where that word once was. Let’s read it again aloud. *‘The entire law is summed up in a single command: \_\_\_\_\_ your neighbor as yourself. Galatians 5:14’*”

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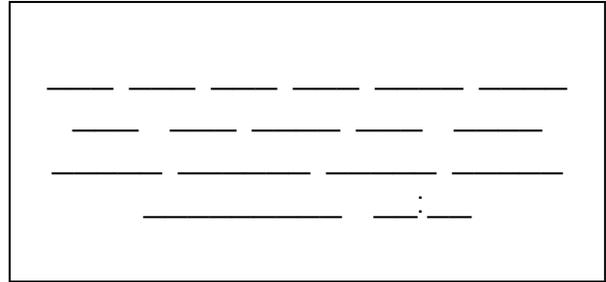
## Rationale:

The students think this activity is game-like, but it's really just repetition in disguise.



## What is Said:

[The teacher calls on a student to select the next word to erase. The student gets to come to the board, erase the word, draw the line, and point to each word as the class reads the verse aloud again. The teacher repeats this process numerous times until the students see only lines left on the board. Now most of the students are able to say the verse from memory!]



## Closing

“This morning our memory verse, craft, and Bible story have all taught us that we need to show love towards others. This week I’d like each of you to think of at least one person that you could show love toward.”

[As students begin to leave, the teacher says something complimentary to each one while passing out the take-home activity sheet.]

“I hope to see you back here next week, Jackie. We sure enjoyed having you here this morning.”

“John, you did a wonderful job on your craft. We’ll see you next week.”

“Bye Susie. Remember to love others, this week, like the good Samaritan did.”

[The teacher spends a few minutes cleaning up her classroom after class. She wipes off the whiteboard, stacks the chairs against the wall, puts away the craft supplies, and hangs the Bible picture for this week on the bulletin board.]

Showing a genuine concern for your students will build a rapport that will make classroom management much easier for you. Students who feel loved will bend over backwards to please you. Students who feel unloved will act out and not be concerned about pleasing you at all.

