

Year 4, Rotation 1

The Beatitudes

Overall Objective

The children will develop a working memory of the Beatitudes. They will learn that God blesses those who follow Jesus. They will learn that Jesus' followers are gentle, kind, and peaceful.

Biblical References

Matthew 5: 3-12

Memory Verse

The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:3-12

- "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."
- "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."
- "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."
- "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."
- "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."
- "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
- "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
- "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."

Biblical Background

It has now been some time since Jesus' forty days in the wilderness, and it is time to begin his ministry. He went to Galilee, and settled in Capernaum, a busy village filled with farmers, fishermen and trading, located near the Sea of Galilee. His decision to stay there was not entirely his choice, it also fulfilled a prophecy: "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles -- the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:1,2) It was there Jesus called his first disciples.

Word of Jesus' teaching and healing had begun to spread throughout the region, and crowds of people, in all stages and conditions of life followed him, either out of curiosity or perhaps hope for themselves.

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him." (Matthew 5:1) At first glance, one might think Jesus sat because he was weary from all the healing, but actually it is Jewish tradition for the rabbi to sit while teaching. Whether the crowd was large or small, his position on the hill ensured that all would hear his message.

If we would read the scriptures a little more carefully, we would get an idea of how Jesus will direct his message. One example is found in Luke 15: "Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling ...". Jesus proceeds to tell a parable of the Lost Sheep (for the sinners), the Lost Coin (for the tax collectors), and the Prodigal Son (for the Pharisees). It was actually one story, but Jesus just changed the example so that all the participants would understand it. That is what Jesus does here -- he sizes up the crowd and uses examples they can understand: poor, mourning, etc. They have numerous needs, so they need a message of encouragement.

However, this message has a double meaning. William Barclay states "this could be described as an ordination sermon for the twelve." Jesus laid out to them their charge before embarking on the task of ministry with him.

Matthew 5:2-11: "Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". In the Hebrew language a word is defined in layers. "Poor" is 'ani, or ebion. These words have a four-stage development of meaning:

- a) They begin by meaning simply poor
- b) Because poor, therefore having no influence or power, help, prestige,
- c) Because having no influence, therefore downtrodden and oppressed by men,
- d) Because he has no earthly resources whatever, put his whole trust in God.

In other words, "I can't do it alone, I need help".

2) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." It's tempting to think of this only in terms of death, but one can mourn a job loss, a divorce, and a spouse or loved one being deployed to a war zone, or a child leaving home. In these moments we come face-to-face with a newfound strength, and sometimes through that comfort God leads us to new and exciting opportunities.

3) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." This is a tough one - one might define "meek" as weak, spineless. If that were true, then inheriting the earth seems a daunting responsibility. Fortunately, that's not the case!

To be meek is to be humble. Restraining one's anger; being in control of one's self, (leading a life of discipline) enables one to lead others. It is also recognizing

our dependence on God to be in control. Numbers 12:3 describes Moses as meek (humble) but he was certainly not weak. He humbled himself before God.

To inherit the earth: This could be read as the land God promised (Canaan) or a type of heaven. So that all blessedness of heaven above and the blessings of earth beneath belong to the meek.

4) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." It's not unusual to hear people say, "I'm starving!" when actually they are just feeling a few hunger pangs. Few people really know what true hunger is. The same for thirst - a turn of the tap, and water is available.

Jesus isn't talking about food and drink - he's talking about justice. Some of the injustices then still exist today. It isn't always enough to send a check to aid a worthy cause - we must FIGHT for right with as much passion as one who works for food and water. A commercial for a sports drink asks, "Is it in you?" The same question can be asked of us: "Is the hunger [for justice] in you?"

5) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall see mercy." Webster's dictionary defines mercy as "kindness in excess of what is expected, kind or compassionate treatment, the power to forgive." As part of human nature, we get our feelings hurt, sometimes too easily. Rather than forgive and try to work things out, it's off to court we go. Mercy is when the victim's family forgives a murderer. In the Lord's Prayer we are instructed to "forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors". (Luke 11:1-4) To show us how, God sent Jesus - he lived with us, saw things with his own eyes, and felt the things we do. If Jesus can forgive his tormentors from the cross (Luke 23:34) should we do less?

6) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Unblemished, perfect, flawless - these are the words that come to mind when one thinks of "pure". These words also remind us of Jesus' traits. Ivory Soap claims to be "99 & 44/100% pure" - almost, but not quite. What makes something completely pure? A life of Christian discipline, living out one's faith. It takes a lifetime of training.

The television program "Antiques Roadshow" is one example of "seeing" eyes. People bring their various items to be evaluated. One person may see a simple vase or painting, but one who is taught what to look for can determine an item's worth. In the same way, the "trained" believer sees God.

7) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." This beatitude sounds simple, but there is more to it. Jesus is talking about right relations between people. In nearly any setting one can find a "troublemaker" and a "peacemaker". The troublemaker always seems to have a negative attitude or creates ill-will in some way, while the peacemaker is always trying to set things straight.

8) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." If the disciples thought following Jesus would be easy, they are in for a rude awakening! This is probably the most important part of his message. Were they prepared to give up everything - their jobs, homes, families, and friends to follow him? It will be hard, very hard to give these up, even to the point of death. Anything new can be a challenge and this new religion was no exception. But those who were willing to make that sacrifice would have eternal life. (Mark 10:17-31)

In other words, to be a true follower of Christ we must:

1. Trust God
2. Be open to God's presence
3. Be Humble
4. Fight for right
5. Forgive
6. Be steadfast
7. Be calm
8. Be courageous

These are the words to live by - to be faithful disciples - a light to everyone in this great big, sometimes scary world.

Workshop Overview

GARDEN OF EATIN'

OVERVIEW

The students will practice putting someone else's needs first by preparing and serving a snack for a partner before they themselves are allowed to eat. The children will also practice letting someone else serve them.

MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles (children to provide)
- Paper plates; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Paper cups; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Plastic bowls (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Napkins (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bagels (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Cream Cheese (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Jelly (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Margarine (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Pitcher of Water (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Plastic knives and spoons (workshop coordinator to provide)
- One donut (workshop coordinator to provide)

TABERNACLE

OVERVIEW

The children will read the Beatitudes in scripture, discuss the meanings of the eight Beatitudes, and apply the Beatitudes to their daily lives.

MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles (children to provide)
- Chart Paper (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Markers (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Traditional Beatitudes worksheet; one per child (teacher to copy)
- Pencils (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- Basket (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Vocabulary strips (workshop coordinator to provide)
- CD player and music (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Beatitudes word search and crossword puzzle sheets (workshop coordinator to provide)

FUN AND GODLY STUFF

OVERVIEW

The children will play a Bingo game to reinforce their familiarity with the Beatitudes and to learn the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles(children to provide)
- Bingo cards (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Lima beans for bingo counters (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Game questions, cut apart (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bowl for bingo questions (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Game prizes: pencils and stickers (workshop coordinator to provide)

OUR ACTS

OVERVIEW

In groups, the children will act out each Beatitude, developing small skits to perform to the class. The “audience” will guess which Beatitude was demonstrated and explain what actions in each skit lead them to their guess.

MATERIAL LIST

- Beatitudes written on chart paper (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Marker for writing on chart paper (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- Bibles (children to provide)
- Beatitudes worksheets and pencils (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Beatitudes stickers (workshop coordinator to provide)

THOU ART

OVERVIEW

The children will decorate foam “keys” with symbols to represent the Beatitudes: the “keys” that open the doors to happy, fulfilled lives.

MATERIAL LIST

- Foamie sheets, 1 per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Colorful Sharpie markers (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Ribbon or yarn (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Scissors (teacher to provide from supply closet)

GARDEN OF EATIN'

OBJECTIVE:

The students will see that the teachings of Jesus have a definite purpose, then and now. They will practice putting someone else's needs first (humility) and also letting someone else serve them. (accepting help)

MATERIALS:

- Bibles (children to provide)
- Paper plates; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Paper cups; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Plastic bowls (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Napkins (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bagels (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Cream Cheese (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Jelly (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Margarine (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Pitcher of Water (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Plastic knives and spoons (workshop coordinator to provide)
- One donut (workshop coordinator to provide)

LESSON:

Welcome the children.

Seat kids at tables where they can see the bounty of breakfast they will be hoping to soon eat.

Open Bibles to Matthew 5 and have kids take turns reading aloud verses 3-11.

Ask the children if they know what the word "meek" means. Help them to define meek or humble. Is it hard to let someone else be first? What makes that hard? Is it hard to care about someone else without worrying about yourself?

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? How do we put our whole trust in God? When people need help, what are some of the ways that God helps them? (Possible answer - God uses us as Christians to help people in need.)

We are going to practice being humble: putting someone else's needs first, and also letting someone else help us today.

Divide the children into pairs.

Say: Today we are going to play a game where we serve food to our partner. Each person will have a chance to be a server.

Explain the rules for breakfast:

1. "Servers" will be breakfast helpers for their partners. "Servers" will ask their partners what they would like to eat and drink. ("Do you want a bagel?" "Would you like me to put cream cheese on it?")
2. "Eaters" may only respond "yes" or "no" in response to a specific question. (i.e. "Do you want a glass of water?" "No") No pointing or giving details.
3. "Servers" may not get any food for themselves. They can only get food for their partners.
4. "Eaters" may not ask for any food. This is not a restaurant, and you are not giving orders!

Note to teacher: This may result in a child getting a plain bagel, instead of one with grape jelly. This would be a good thing for discussion purposes. DON'T rescue them.

Discuss the following questions while the first group of "Eaters" enjoy the breakfast:

1. Did everyone get exactly what he or she wanted? What happened?
2. How did you feel if you did not get exactly what you wanted? How do you feel when God or your parents don't give you exactly what you want? What do the Beatitudes have to say about that?

After discussing the game, reverse roles. "Servers" now become "Eaters." After everyone has had a chance to be a "Server," discuss the following questions while the second group of "Eaters" enjoys the breakfast:

1. Did everyone have the opportunity to serve someone else? How did that feel?
2. How can you practice serving God every day? How can you practice serving other people?

If time allows:

Put out one donut and make it clear to the kids that it is the ONLY donut. Do NOT have a stash in the kitchen for later - it will diminish the impact. Question kids: If you are a peacemaker - what do you do about the donut? What is the way to keep right relations between us? How does this apply to your daily life? The world?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear God, please help us to remember to take care of others' needs before our own. Help us to also accept the help of others when we need it. Amen.

TABERNACLE

OBJECTIVE:

The children will learn what the following words mean and be able to apply them to their daily lives: disciples, poor in spirit, kingdom of heaven, meek/gentle, righteousness, mercy, peacemakers, pure in heart, and rejoice.

MATERIALS:

- Bibles (children to provide)
- Chart Paper (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Markers (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Traditional Beatitudes worksheet; one per child (teacher to copy)
- Pencils (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- Basket (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Vocabulary strips (workshop coordinator to provide)
- CD player and music (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Beatitudes word search and crossword puzzle sheets (workshop coordinator to provide)

LESSON:

Welcome the children.

Say: Today we are going to discover some exciting news that took place a long time ago. We are going to study the Beatitudes. We are going to learn what our faith in Jesus means to us as we live each day.

Say: Has anyone ever heard of the Beatitudes? Who gave us these keys for long-lasting happiness? Explain that we can think of the Beatitudes as reminders of how God wants us to live. God wants us to love Him, to avoid violence, to be patient, and to obey Him.

Read together: Matthew 5: 1-12.

Say: What does “blessed” mean? Discuss/ write ideas on chart paper.

Pass out “Traditional Beatitudes” worksheet to the children. Pass out pencils.

Together, re-write each Beatitude in words that the children can understand. Children do not have to write in complete sentences!

For example:

- Poor in spirit: people who are having a hard time in life and need to feel God's love.
- Those who mourn: lost a pet, friend moved away, didn't make the team.
- The meek: people who don't brag; those who are humble
- Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: Those who try to do the right thing, always tell the truth, follow the 10 Commandments
- The merciful: people who are patient and kind
- The pure in heart: people who love God first and are not greedy
- Peacemakers: people who try to work out arguments without hitting, yelling, etc.

Say: Can you think of someone who is merciful? Pure in heart? Meek?
Allow time for discussion.

Say: We are going to review what each Beatitude vocabulary word means with a game. I am going to pass around a basket with slips of paper in it. On each piece of paper is a vocabulary word from the Beatitudes. We are going to sit in a circle on the floor, then pass the basket around while I play some music. When the music stops, the person holding the basket must take out a slip and read the word and tell us what it means. Other classmates can help you with this part! When all the slips have been read, the game is over.

Assemble children in a circle and play the game.

**If time permits, children can complete the Beatitudes word search or crossword puzzle sheet.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray: Lord, help us show mercy to our friends. Help us to find ways to keep peace and be gentle with all those around us. Thank you for blessing us with scripture that tells us the truth and provides hope for tomorrow. Amen.

Traditional Beatitudes (NRSV)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

FUN AND GODLY STUFF

OBJECTIVE:

The children will play a Bingo game to reinforce their familiarity with the Beatitudes and to learn the meanings of unfamiliar words and phrases.

MATERIALS:

- Bibles(children to provide)
- Bingo cards (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Lima beans for bingo counters (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Game questions, cut apart (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bowl for bingo questions (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Game prizes: pencils and stickers (workshop coordinator to provide)

LESSON:

1. Help the students to find the book of Matthew. Get the shepherds to go around the room and help with this. Many of the children will already know the four Gospels. If necessary, remind them that the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments. Each part is made up of books, which are divided into chapters and verses. Ask whether Matthew is in the Old or New Testament (It tells about Jesus so it's in the New Testament). Make sure everyone knows that Matthew is the first book in the New Testament.

After they've found Matthew, help them find chapter 5, verse 1. Some of the children will confuse chapters and verses. Show them that chapter numbers are the big ones, and also are at top of every page.

2. Read or review the passage. With older children, you might let them take turns reading the verses. With younger children in the early weeks, tell them to listen carefully while you read it and count how many times they hear something and they're not sure what it means. In later weeks, with younger children you might begin each Beatitude and let them finish it.

Matthew 5: The Beatitudes

- 1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:
- 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
- 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
- 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
- 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
- 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Beatitudes Bingo:

Tell the children to close their Bibles. Pass out the bingo cards and counters (beans, buttons, or other small objects). The “Beatitudes” square in the middle of all the cards is free, so tell all the children to cover it with a counter. Have questions on slips of paper in a bowl. Explain:

“I’m going to draw questions out of this bowl. When I call out a question, look on your card and see if you see the answer to the question. Most of the questions are fill-in-the-blanks, where I’ll read part of one of the Beatitudes and you have to fill in the missing words. If you think you have the answer on your card, raise your hand.”

As you ask each question, call on someone to answer it. If that person gets it wrong, keep taking answers until someone gets it right. Then everyone who has the correct answer on their card should cover it with a counter. Discuss the answer with the class before going on to the next question. The purpose of the game is to provide opportunities to teach the vocabulary and meaning of the Beatitudes, so try to cover all the discussion points.

Tell the children: “When you cover five squares in a row, call out ‘Beatitudes.’” When that happens, don’t end the game; keep playing until you’ve used all the questions. By the end, most players should have completed a row. Give small prize, such as a sticker or pencil, to the players as they finish – and to any players who haven’t covered a row when you run out of questions.

Grades 1-2: Play the game and discuss the answers as above, but write each answer on the chalkboard so the non-readers can find it on their cards. Have the shepherd go around and help the kids. If the questions are too hard, use the multiple-choice option.

Discuss: In the Beatitudes, Jesus gives his followers advice on how to live. What are some of the things he tells them to do? (depend on God, be humble, obey God, be merciful, make peace, do what’s right even when people treat you badly for it, etc.)

Jesus tells his followers that when they live that way, God will bless them. What do you think “bless” means? (make happy, bring good things).

Who was Jesus talking to? (His disciples—the special 12 and a crowd of his followers) When we follow Jesus, we are his disciples too.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, I am happy
When you are by my side.
You are my friend and teacher
My helper and my guide.

Comfort me, dear Jesus,
When I am feeling sad.
Let your love surround me,
Help me to be glad.

Teach me to be kind, Lord.
And I will grow like you,
Helping those who are in need;
Serving, as you would do.

When I follow you, Lord,
You make everything all right.
You make me feel so happy.
You fill me with delight.

When others are unkind,
In what they say or do,
Help me to forgive them, Lord,
Before the day is through.

Lord, help my eyes to look to you,
My hands to do your will.
Teach my ears to hear your word,
And my heart to love you still.

When others get upset, Lord,
Let my words, I pray,
Bring peace and happiness
To make a better day.

Lord, no matter what my friends say,
No matter what they do,
Give me strength to always say,
"I will follow you!"

Beatitudes Bingo Questions:

Finish this verse:

God blesses those people who depend only on God. They belong to the _____.

Answer: kingdom of heaven

Multiple-choice option:

Kingdom of Israel

Kingdom of heaven

Kingdom of Narnia

Discuss: (Note to leader: skip this discussion point if you have already drawn the other question in which “kingdom of heaven” is used).

What do we usually think of when we hear the word heaven? (*Place you go when you die to be with God.*) When Jesus says “kingdom of heaven,” it’s the same as saying the “kingdom of God.” It’s not something we find when we die, it’s the world right now in this life. When we depend on and trust God, follow Jesus’ teachings and try to live the way Jesus lived, we are working toward making life on earth right now the kingdom of heaven.

Finish this verse:

God blesses those people who grieve. They will find _____!

Answer: Comfort.

Multiple-choice option:

Money

Treasure

Comfort

Discuss: What does “grieve” mean? (*To feel sad*) What are some things that can make people grieve? (*Death of a person or a pet, having a friend move away, etc.*) When Jesus said God comforts people who grieve, he might have been talking about people who had lost a loved one or had something sad happen to him. He also might have been talking about people who were sad about all the things that are wrong with the world and all the ways in which people don’t act as though they’re living in the kingdom of God.

Finish this verse:

God blesses those people who are humble. The _____ will belong to them!

Answer: earth

Multiple-choice option:

Earth

Sun

Kingdom

Discuss: What does “humble” mean? (not proud or haughty, not showing off or bragging, admitting when you’re wrong, not thinking you’re better than other people)

Finish this verse:

God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to _____ . They will be given what they want!

Answer: eat or drink

Multiple-choice option:

Laugh or play

Eat or drink

Dance or sing

Finish this verse:

God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with _____ !

Answer: mercy

Multiple-choice option:

Mercy

Respect

Comfort

Discuss: What does “merciful” mean? (*Being kind, forgiving, compassionate, sometimes even toward people who have done something wrong and don’t deserve kind treatment.*) We all need mercy sometimes, from other people and from God, so we need to show mercy ourselves.

Finish this verse:
God blesses those people whose hearts are _____. They will see God!

Answer: pure.

Multiple-choice option:
Healthy
Strong
Pure

Discuss: What do you think a “pure heart” is? (*Loving God and other people, wanting to do what’s right*)

Finish this verse:
God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called _____!

Answer: God’s children

Multiple-choice option:
God’s children
Angels
Good people

Discuss: What is “peace”? (*Not fighting or arguing*) Sometimes we need to make peace with people we’re mad at, and sometimes we can make peace by helping other people get along with each other.

In Bible passage that tells us the Beatitudes, who is talking?

Answer: Jesus

Multiple-choice option:
Jesus
Matthew
Moses

Finish this verse:
God blesses those people who are treated badly for _____ . They belong to the kingdom of heaven.

Answer: doing right

Multiple-choice option:

Talking

Doing right

Being smart

Discuss: (Note to leader: skip this discussion point if you have already drawn the other question in which “kingdom of heaven” is used).

What do we usually think of when we hear the word heaven? (*Where you go when you die to be with God.*) When Jesus says “kingdom of heaven,” it’s the same as saying the “kingdom of God.” It’s not something we find when we die, it’s the world right now in this life. When we depend on and trust God, follow Jesus’ teachings and try to live the way Jesus lived, we are working toward making life on earth right now the kingdom of heaven.

Finish this verse:
God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven. People did these same things to the _____ who lived long ago.

Answer: prophets

Multiple-choice option:

Ancestors

Preachers

Prophets

Discuss: What does “insult” mean? (*to say something mean, to hurt somebody’s feelings.*) What does “mistreat” mean? (*to treat badly, to abuse, to hurt, to be mean to somebody.*)

What’s a prophet? (*somebody who brings a message from God.*) The Bible tells lots of stories about prophets who brought messages from God telling people what they were doing wrong. The people didn’t want to hear the truth, and they punished the prophets for speaking the truth.

In what book of the Bible do we find the Beatitudes?

Answer: Matthew

Multiple-choice option:

Matthew

Mark

John

OUR ACTS

OBJECTIVE:

Children will understand the Beatitudes through reading, discussion, and acting.

MATERIALS:

- Beatitudes written on chart paper (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Marker for writing on chart paper (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- Bibles (children to provide)
- Beatitudes worksheets and pencils (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Beatitudes stickers (workshop coordinator to provide)

LESSON:

Welcome the children.

Say: Today we will be reading Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which includes the Beatitudes. We will be acting out the Beatitudes to better understand what they mean.

Read Matthew 5:1-2 together.

1. Discuss each Beatitude with the children. Ask the children to give examples of how a person would act who is following each beatitude. (i.e. a peace maker would try to work out a solution to an argument between friends and stop them from fighting.)
2. Write the children's ideas on chart paper for the class to see.
3. After discussing beatitudes ask children to form small groups (2 to 3 per group). Depending on the group you may ask the shepherds to help you assign groups or children can select their own groups. Each group can choose a Beatitude to act out. They can look at the poster where ideas were written down for help. It does not matter if several choose the same one. They shouldn't tell which one they have chosen.
4. Next, the small groups develop a little skit or scene demonstrating their Beatitude. Give them about 10-15 minutes to practice. Wander about from group to group giving suggestions and encouragement. They can be acting out a modern or a biblical scene.
5. After practicing have children gather in a circle to watch each other's skits/scenes. Have each group perform without telling which Beatitude they are acting out. When they are done ask the audience to guess which Beatitude was demonstrated and why they thought so. Give praise and cheers (maybe a small prize such as a sticker) for right answers.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Pray: Thank you God for giving us Jesus who showed us how to be good Christians. Amen.

***If time permits, have children work on The Beatitudes worksheet.

Examples of Beatitudes and what they mean for us

Contemporary English Version	What this means/examples
<i>When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the side of a mountain and sat down.</i>	
<i>God blesses those people who depend only on him. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.</i>	God blesses people who humbly love Him and need Him. Perhaps this means people who are having an especially hard time in life and need to feel secure in God's love. Who do you know who especially needs God's love right now?
<i>God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!</i>	God blesses people who are sad (lost or sick loved one) etc. or people who are sad about unhappiness in the world (floods, famine). God's comfort can be God guiding people who are sad about unhappiness in the world to help others.
<i>God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them.</i>	Humble people do not brag, they are gentle with others and nonviolent. A humble person wouldn't brag about how far he could kick a ball but would use his talents to teach someone else.
<i>God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want.</i>	God will help people who want to know God's love and try hard to do what God and Jesus have taught us by giving them understanding and knowledge of God's love. Children who try to learn about Jesus and follow his teaching will be happy because they will know God's love.
<i>God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy!</i>	God asks us to be patient and kindhearted. An older child can be patient with a younger brother who breaks a toy.
<i>God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see him!</i>	Our hearts are pure when we are only devoted to God, not distracted by money, TV, or too much "stuff".
<i>God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called his children!</i>	People who make peace try to live in peace and help others live in peace. A child who helps two friends make up after a fight is a peacemaker.
<i>God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.</i>	Have you ever been teased for doing the right thing or not going along with the crowd? Jesus understood this and tells us that God is with us always.
<i>God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.</i>	Jesus was treated badly by people who did not believe his teaching. Still today people can be treated badly for believing in Jesus. Christians need to take a stand for what is right even if at times it is unpopular.

THOU ART

OBJECTIVE:

Students will learn that Jesus taught the Beatitudes as the “keys” to how we should live. They will create keys to illustrate the Beatitudes and to serve as a permanent reminder to live the Beatitudes.

MATERIALS:

- Foam key chain sets, 1 per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Colorful Sharpie markers (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Ribbon or yarn (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Scissors (teacher to provide from supply closet)

LESSON:

Open - Introduction

Welcome the children to the Art Workshop. Do introductions. Open with prayer. A suggestion: "Dear God, Thank you for this day and for everyone who is here today. We ask that you help us learn about you and how you would have us live as your disciples. Amen."

Gather the students around the table. Explain that we are learning (continuing to learn) about Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which includes a portion of Jesus' teachings called the Beatitudes. Jesus gave us the Beatitudes as the "keys" to how we should live. We can think of the Beatitudes as being keys that open the doors to a happy, fulfilled life. Today we'll be making keys to help us remember the Beatitudes.

Ask: What are some things that make you happy? (Allow a few answers.) Do any of those things you listed provide long-lasting happiness or do they only provide happiness for a little while?

Say: Jesus taught us the Beatitudes as the keys to happiness that can last a lifetime. Jesus, in his teaching, used the word "blessed" to mean this long-lasting happiness. Listen for these key ways of living as we read our Bible passage.

Distribute Bibles. Have everyone find Matthew 5:1-11 in the Bible. Read the scripture together.

Say: Today we will make keys to represent the Beatitudes. Show the sample keys.

Before starting it might be necessary to spend some time discussing the meaning of each Beatitude, in order to get ideas for what sort of symbol could be used on their keys. Write or sketch any ideas suggested by the students on the

chalkboard. Do encourage the students to use their own creativity. Use the information in the background materials and the following ideas as needed, for further discussion:

- Poor in spirit: Humble, dependent on God. Symbol: figure kneeling in prayer, a cross.
- Mourning: Sad. Comforted: Flowers, XXXOOO (hugs and kisses), flowers, anything else that symbolizes comfort.
- Meek: Gentle. Symbol: a lamb, earth (for inherit the earth).
- Hungry for righteousness: wanting to obey God and do what's right. Symbol for "filled": a full cup.
- Merciful: Compassionate, forgiving. Symbol: two people shaking hands, one person helping another.
- Pure in heart: focused on God. Symbol: a heart with 100% written on it.
- Peacemakers: a dove, an olive branch, a peace sign, a bridge between two people.
- Persecuted for being Christian: One person looking to a cross while second person shakes fist.

Provide the supplies and illustrate the process for making the keys. Explain that on the top of each key they may wish to make a symbol for the Beatitude. On the long portion of the key they are to write a word or words for that Beatitude. Let the students know that there might not be time to make a key for each Beatitude.

Other design hints:

- Encourage simple designs. Stick figure people are fine.
- Students who can't think of an idea of a symbol for a Beatitude may wish to just write the entire Beatitude on their key.

Have students share one key they have made. Have them suggest a way they can live that Beatitude.

Ask: Do you think it is easy to live the Beatitudes?

Say: Living as Jesus taught is hard! When we use these key ways of living, we live as disciples of Jesus. This makes the world a better place and we receive that long-lasting happiness that Jesus spoke about.

Say: Hang your keys in a place where you will see them every day. Maybe hang them on your backpack! When you see your keys, remember that these keys show us how to live as Jesus taught.

CLOSING PRAYER:

"Dear God, We thank you for loving each and every one of us. Help us, when we see these keys we made, remember how to live as Jesus taught us. Amen."