

SABBATH SCHOOL

Level 4 • Unit 9 • Week 2

GENTLENESS

OBJECTIVE:

To explain what gentleness is and how and why we should be producing this fruit in our lives.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Bring: A pet kitten or puppy (a stuffed animal if this is not possible).

Say: I want each of you to hold this _____ and feel how soft and small it is. It is very important for us to treat everything and everyone we meet with gentleness.

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: Today we are going to learn about gentleness and see how important it is. All of us should learn to care how we treat people we see each day. You know, it's very easy to go our merry way, not even thinking of those around us.

Ask: How do you like people to treat you?

Say: You probably don't like it when someone is unkind or says mean things. All of us like to be treated well and with gentleness, just like small animals do. I'd like to tell you a story that happened when David and his men were running from King Saul.

David and his men had been traveling through the desert for weeks. During this time they had helped some shepherds who worked for a man named Nabal. Nabal and his wife, Abigail, lived in a place called Carmel. They were very rich and owned 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. As David approached Carmel he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. David thought that since they had treated Nabal's men well that Nabal would provide his men with food.

They were to tell Nabal that David had sent them. They were to say to Nabal, "Peace be to you, peace be to your house and peace be to all that is yours."

Ask: Do you think this was a nice way to greet someone?

Say: Yes, it was a very warm greeting.

David told his men to ask Nabal to let them stay with him and eat with him until David arrived there a day or so later. They were to ask this in a very nice way, paying honor to Nabal from David.

Ask: What do you think Nabal told David's men?

Say: He was mean and grumpy as ever. He said, "Who is this David? Many servants run away from their masters. Shall I give my meat and bread and water to men I don't know?"

Ask: What do you think of his answer to them? He certainly wasn't gentle or kind, was he?

Say: David's men returned to him and told him what Nabal said to them. David was very angry. He told all his men to put on their swords. David put on his sword too. He and his 600 men prepared to ride to where Nabal lived and destroy him and all that he owned.

Meanwhile, a servant of Nabal's went to Abigail, Nabal's beautiful wife, and told her how mean Nabal was to David's men. He also told her that David would come and destroy all of them.

Ask: What do you think Abigail did? What would you have done?

Say: Well, most people might just decide to get out of there before David got there, but not Abigail! She knew her husband had dealt rudely with David's men, so she wanted to do something about it.

Abigail quickly took two hundred loaves of bread, five sheep, ready to cook, corn, wine, raisins and cakes made of figs. She had her servants load them on donkeys. She told them to take the donkeys and she would follow.

Ask: Where do you think she was going? Do you think she was trying to run from David's army?

Say: No, she and the others rode to meet David and his men. However, she did not tell Nabal.

Ask: Why do you suppose she didn't want Nabal to know?

Say: Being the kind of man he was, Nabal would have stopped her. Then David's men would surely have destroyed them.

When Abigail, the servants and the donkeys carrying all the food came to the bottom of a hill, they saw David and all 600 of his soldiers coming toward them.

Ask: Do you think Abigail and her servants were afraid?

Say: She probably was afraid. David was so angry with Nabal, that he vowed to wipe out Nabal's life and all he owned. He did not plan to leave any man alive.

When Abigail rode up to David, she jumped off her donkey and fell face down at David's feet.

Ask: Why do you think she did this?

Say: Abigail was showing honor to David.

Abigail then begged David to put the blame of what her husband did on her. She also asked if he would hear what she had to say.

Ask: Do you think David listened to her?

Say: Yes, David listened to her. She said Nabal was always evil. She explained that she had not known that David's men had come to her home or she would have fed them as he asked. One more thing she told David that was very important. She told him that God would not be pleased with him if he shed the blood of all those whom Nabal owned. Why should innocent people suffer? She told him that God would take care of David's enemies.

Ask: Do you think David went back home or on to fight Nabal?

Say: He thanked Abigail and blessed her for coming. He admitted that she was right to keep him from shedding innocent blood. David accepted the food she had offered him and told her to go in peace.

Ask: Do you think if Abigail had rode to David, arguing and yelling at him, that he would have gone away and left them in peace?

Say: No—he probably wouldn't have. Abigail used gentleness. She spoke kindly to David. She honored him with her words and with her actions. As you see, gentleness won out.

Abigail returned to her house. She planned to tell Nabal what she had done to save them, but he was drunk. He was having a feast fit for a king for himself. Therefore, she decided to wait until the morning to tell him.

Ask: Do you think that she told Nabal that next morning?

Say: Yes, she told him. When she did, the Bible tells us, "his heart died within him, and he became like a stone." Apparently, he had some sort of heart attack. Nabal died 10 days later. God had ended his life for all the evil he had done to David and others.

When David heard that the evil Nabal was dead, he blessed God for taking care of his enemy.

Ask: What do you think happened to the beautiful and gentle Abigail?

Say: She married David sometime after Nabal died. As you can see, gentleness works much better than meanness when dealing with others. God cares about us and is gentle with us. He expects us to do likewise and be caring and gentle to everyone and everything we see.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Have students draw the faces of Abigail and Nabal on the activity page (see end of lesson). Then have them act out what they would have said to David.

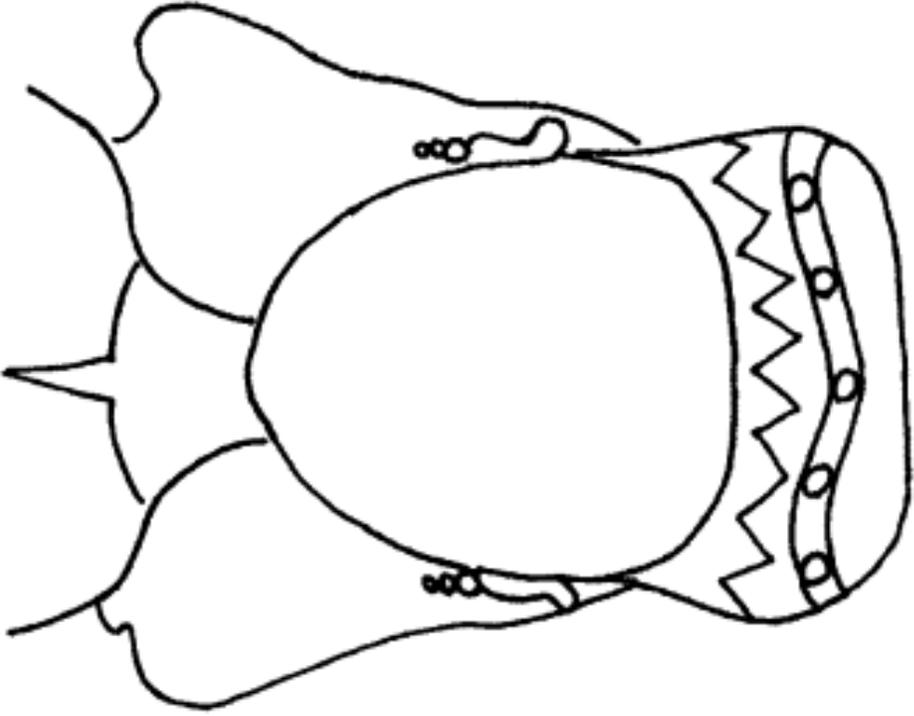
MUSIC:

Teacher's selection from the United Church of God hymnal.

MEMORY VERSE:

Luke 6:31 "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise."

Finish Nabal and Abigail's faces. How do you think Nabal and Abigail would have looked?



family activity

THE POINT:

To explain what gentleness is and how and why we should be producing this fruit in our lives.

ASK ME...

- To tell the story of Abigail, Nabal and David.
- How did Abigail speak to David?
- Was David thankful he had listened to Abigail?

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Make it a goal to act and speak kindly and gently with one another this week. At the end of the week, ask each member if they didn't enjoy their family a little more that week. Suggest that it become a permanent way to treat one another.

MEMORY VERSE:

Luke 6:31 "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise."