



We love because HE first loved us. 1 John 4:19

LESSON GUIDE

INTRODUCTION:

Welcome to the Kids Helping Kids Lesson Guide. This lesson guide provides a great opportunity to teach kids how they can affect change in the lives of other children across Georgia. Kids can make a difference!

The following pages are designed to provide a one-hour lesson for a youth or children's group of any size. You may choose to only use certain components, or you may choose to expand the lesson over a series of a few weeks. Our Kids Helping Kids Lesson Guide gives your students a hands-on way to help other young people right here in Georgia.

This Lesson Guide contains a Bible lesson, an activity to help youth understand how others may feel, some real-life stories of the children we serve, and some ideas for what to do next. Through this lesson students will help the kids, teens, and families The Children's Home serves.

Right now, there are over 13,000 children in the foster care system in Georgia, and every single month this number increases. These are children just like those in your congregation! The need has never been greater. We know that together, with God's help, we can bring transformative, healing grace to a hurting world.

Thank you for partnering with us to make a difference in the lives of children right here in Georgia!



ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S HOME:

The United Methodist Children's Home restores children and families from trauma through Jesus Christ. We envision a world where every child is raised in a loving, compassionate, and nurturing home. Established in 1871 to care for children, we continue to evolve to help children and families.

Our ministry now centers on three programs:

- Foster Care- Placing children into nurturing, compassionate, and loving foster care homes while helping to restore family relationships;
- Independent and Transitional Living Programs- Preparing young adults who are still in Georgia's foster care system to make positive life decisions and become productive citizens; and
- Family Housing- Strengthening and preserving families by providing housing and support to families at risk of homelessness.





BIBLE LESSON:

Read Mark 9:33-37

Say: In Mark Chapter 9, we catch up with Jesus and the disciples as they have been on their way to Capernaum. While walking they spent their time arguing with one another about which one of them was the greatest.

Ask: Have you ever gotten in an argument with a friend about who's better?

Say: They arrive to the house where they would be staying, and Jesus turns to them and asks, "What were you arguing about on the way?" The room goes silent. I can imagine the disciples shifting on their feet or in their chairs and looking around to each other. Jesus doesn't even need them to answer and doesn't wait for them to answer. He simply sits down and calls the twelve. This might remind you of a time when you fight with your brothers or sisters and your mom or dad sits down and has a talk with you. Having listened to enough, Jesus shuts down the conversation with this Word, "Whoever wants to be the first must be the last of all and servant of all." What you do for others is how you show others that you follow Jesus.

Ask: How do you think Jesus wants us to be servants?

Say: The scripture goes on. "Then Jesus took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me isn't actually welcoming me, but rather the one who sent me.'"

Ask: What do you think Jesus meant when he said to welcome a child?

Say: Jesus welcomed a child to make a point to his disciples. In Jesus' time, nobody paid children much attention. When we serve, we aren't to serve to get something in return. We are called to welcome those most in need of our care, those who have experienced loss, and those who need loving homes. Jesus tells us to welcome children just like you. He even sets the example and does it first! Welcoming children is part of following Jesus. Welcoming children is a part of being the church!



ACTIVITY:

Trash Bag (Option for Younger Students):

Give a trash bag to one volunteer. Provide a pile of about ten items that the students might find in their house. Examples include clothes, books, toys, food, stuffed animals, and electronics.

Say: Many of the children we serve come from very sad situations. Their parents are unable to take care of them and keep them safe. Many of them suddenly must move from their homes to a new home with people they have never met.

Ask: If you had to move from one house to another and could only pack five things in a trash bag, what would you pack?

Together, agree upon the five things that would go into the trash bag.

Say: It's tough being a kid away from home. No kid should have to choose what they will put in their trash bag. It's important to understand how sad that might feel. The people at The Children's Home do all they can to help kids who must put their things in the trash bags.

Sticky Notes (Option for Older Students):

Give each student a pen and five sticky notes. Ask each student to write the five most important things in their life.

Say: The children we serve at The Children's Home have all lost something. Many times, experiencing trauma means that you lose some of the most important things in your life. Sometimes, you get to choose what it is you must get rid of.

Ask students to remove two sticky notes, representing the two things they would most likely give up.

Say: Sometimes, things are taken from children in trauma and they don't have a choice as to where they live, who takes care of them, or what they can take with them.

Ask students to remove one sticky note from the person on their left, and another sticky note from the person sitting on their right.

Say: Take a look at what you have left. How do you feel knowing that this is all you have left in this world? This is how children in foster care feel. This is why it is important to do everything we can to offer hope to them.

STORIES FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOME:



The following stories are true stories of the ways The United Methodist Children's Home restores children and families from trauma through Jesus Christ. The names have been changed for confidentiality purposes. These stories may be read aloud by volunteers in a large group gathering or may be read and discussed in a small group gathering.

Bobby and Ray:

Bobby & Ray lived with their mom in a one bedroom hotel room. Sometimes Bobby and Ray went without food or clean clothes to go to school in. Bobby & Ray's mom loved them very much, but she was sad all the time, and often lied in bed all day. It was not safe for them to live with their mom any longer, so they came and lived with the Smiths, a nice foster family from The Children's Home. The Smiths talked to Bobby & Ray's mom almost every day while they were living with them. They encouraged her to make better choices so Bobby & Ray could come back home. They invited her to their home for visits and meals while Bobby & Ray were living with them. Eventually Bobby and Ray got to go home and live with their mom again! She was much happier now, and she even had her own apartment and a job. The Smiths were happy to see Bobby & Ray reunited with their mom, and grateful that they could help when they were needed. When we support The Children's Home, we help kids just like Bobby & Ray - kids who need a safe home to live in while their parents work on their problems.

Cheyenne:

Cheyenne was 15 years old when her father decided he could no longer care for her. Cheyenne's mom had passed away several years ago, and her father had tried to take care of her, but lately he didn't have a job and they had lost their apartment. Cheyenne came to live in the Independent Living Program at The Children's Home. She had her very own room in one of the Children's Home's 12 cottages. While at The Children's Home, her case worker and other staff became like family to her. She learned how to live on her own, manage her own money, and learned other life skills. Eventually Cheyenne graduated high school and went on to college. When we support The Children's Home, we help kids just like Cheyenne - kids who need a safe place to learn and grow in.



Micah:

Micah was only 6 months old when she came to live with the Glenns. She had some special medical issues that her mom couldn't help her with. Micah didn't have any other family that could watch her, so The Children's Home was able to send her to live with the Glenns. The Glenns already had five other children but were excited to welcome a new little girl into their home. With the Glenns, Micah made big improvements in her health, learned to walk and eat on her own. She attended lots of therapy to help with her daily living, and is now talking and attending school. Micah will still require ongoing medical support to help her, but she is doing great! In time, Micah was adopted by the Glenns and now she has a forever home with parents who take wonderful care of her and 5 adopted siblings. When we support The Children's Home, we help kids just like Micah - kids who need a safe home and a forever family.

The Martin Family:

The Martin family was scared and didn't know what to do. Mr. Martin had lost his job and Mrs. Martin could no longer work due to her illness. They had two small children, Scott & Michelle. Mr. Martin could barely afford food for his family, and they were about to be homeless. The Children's Home invited the Martins to come live in one of the Family Housing apartments. While at The Children's Home, the Martins took classes to help Mr. Martin find a job and learn how to better manage their money. Within a few months they were back on their feet and ready to move out into their own home. When we support The Children's Home, we help families just like the Martins - families who need a home and some help.

Sam:

Sam was picked up from school one day by a lady who worked for the state. Something bad had happened to Sam's parents and they weren't able to take care of him anymore. Sam went to go live with the Williams family. Sam was very sad that he couldn't be with his mom and dad anymore, but the Williams took very good care of him. Eventually, Sam's grandma, who lived far away, could move to Georgia. A judge said that Sam could go live with his grandma! He missed his mom and dad very much, but was also very happy to go and live with his grandma. When we support The Children's Home, we help kids just like Sam - kids who need a safe home to stay in until they can go live with their extended family.

SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN:



Now that your students have learned who we serve and why we serve them, now is their chance to do something about it. The following pages contain a list of ways to get involved. The ideas provided below are examples of things that The Children's Home is always in need of. For more ideas that may be specific to your area or to the season in which you choose to teach this lesson, speak with your Church Relations staff member. They can

provide additional resources or answer any questions you might have. For a list of Church Relations staff members according to district within the North Georgia Conference, see page 10.

After your project is done, brag on your students! Take a photo of the group's efforts. Find "The United Methodist Children's Home" on Facebook and post your photo, church name, and what your children accomplished. Or, email your photo and an update to your Church Relations staff member.

Financial Support:

Every dollar your church raises goes toward supporting kids right here in the state of Georgia! The kids at your church have the opportunity to impact hundreds of lives in Georgia, but first, it's important to set the right goal for your church.

To provide as much support as possible, The Children's Home gives \$45 per month to the families we serve to be used for sports, swim lessons and other hobbies or needs a child might have. We want kids to have the same opportunities as others. This support is made possible through the gifts of churches like yours.

Promote this lesson early and announce your goal. One goal could be to raise \$45 within the month. Perhaps you want to set a loftier goal and support one foster child for an entire year for a total of \$540. Whatever goal you decide on, let people know!



Ask the students to come up with creative ways to reach their goal. Some churches in the past have sold t-shirts, gone trick-or-treating for support, or held a dinner theater. Most importantly, remember to make it fun! Have a contest between boys and girls or different age groups to see who can raise the most! Collect change in soda cans (a soda can holds about 550 pennies), jars, buckets, a children's wagon, etc. Use a scale and have weigh-ins to see whose collection weighs the most.

Write a check in the amount you raised to "The United Methodist Children's Home." Please put "Kids Helping Kids" in the memo line of your check and mail to:

The United Methodist Children's Home
1967 Lakeside Parkway, Building 400
Tucker, GA 30083

Diapers:

Many of the children The Children's Home serves are still in diapers. One of the many ways churches can support foster families is by providing diapers. When a foster family receives diapers, they know that they are loved and supported by churches like yours. Specifically, we are in need of pull-ups and diapers size 4.

You could hold a diaper drive, compete to see who donates the most diapers, or host an event where the cost of admission is a pack of diapers. You can even let the group of students decorate the outside of the pack of diapers. When the diapers are collected, contact your Church Relations staff member. They will be happy to come and pray a blessing over the diapers that have been collected.

Foster Parent Appreciation Bag:

The Children's Home knows that the more we support our foster parents, the more safe, loving homes we will provide for children. These foster parents have agreed to open their homes to kids they have never even met! It is important to appreciate them for this selfless act.

Your students have the opportunity to create a Foster Parent Appreciation Bag. You may work together to create a bag of things parents might like. Ideas may include a hand-drawn letter or card, household cleaning supplies, toothbrushes and toothpaste, gift cards to practical places such as the grocery store or gas station, gift cards to fun places such as a restaurant or movie theater, a devotional book, a journal, and more.

Upon the completion of your bag, contact your Church Relations staff member. They will be happy to come and pray a blessing over the bag and get it into the right hands.

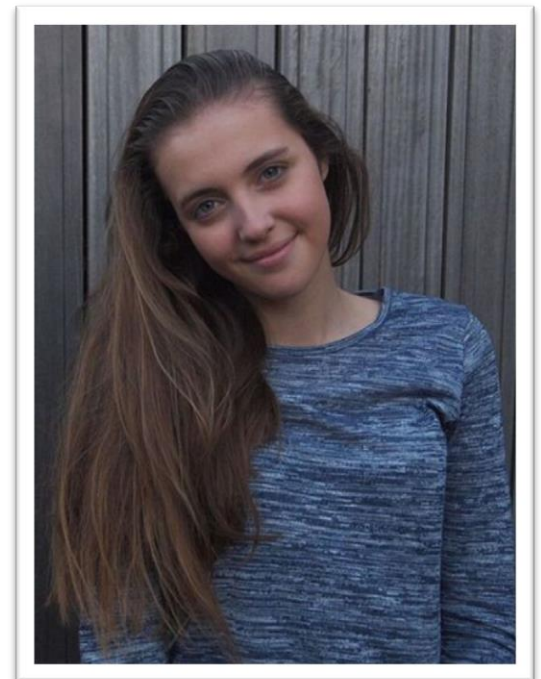


Prayer:

It is likely that during this lesson your students have heard something they had not previously heard before. Their eyes might be open to the traumatic situations some kids experience. They might be wondering what to do from here. One of the best responses to eye-opening moments like these is to pray.

Your students may pray in smaller groups or as a large group. You may lead the prayer time or the students may lead. You might even make the children and families we serve your group's prayer focus for the month or year. Below are some ideas of what you may pray for.

- People to answer the call to become foster parents
- People who volunteer to support foster families
- Your church to imagine new ways to support The Children's Home
- The children we serve in Foster Care as they are placed into new homes
- The biological parents of the children we serve
- Our Transitional Living Program residents
- Our Independent Living Program Residents
- Our Family Housing Residents
- Our Foster Care Workers, Life Coaches, and other staff who work with children experiencing trauma.
- Our foster parents and foster siblings
- Judges, Attorneys, CASA workers, DFCS workers, and other people who work in child welfare





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