LESSON 17

A SHRIVELLED HAND AND HARD HEARTS



Aim: **To teach the children that our attitude towards other people shows what we think of God.**

Scripture Reading: **Mark 3:1-6**

Memory Verse: **Matthew 25:40**
"[W]hatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

PRESENTING THE LESSON

STARTING POINT

Before the class, arrange with one of the children to assist you by acting in a little play. (You could also use two of the children.) Act a scene in a house where the child is asked to help with some work. The child replies, "Oh no, I can't do it now. I have to get ready for church choir practice. I'm too busy to help you."

MAIN POINTS OF THE LESSON

1. Jesus was very busy. People followed him everywhere, wanting his help. However, Jesus never used that as an excuse not to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath to worship God. **Explain that the people of the Jewish faith worship God on Saturday, not Sunday, and they call it the Sabbath day.**
2. The religious leaders also went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. They watched Jesus closely. Would he obey all the religious laws? (3:1-2). God had set only 10 commandments, but there were over 300 of these rules they had made! It made the Sabbath a difficult day, because there were so many rules to keep in mind. Absolutely no work was to be done on the Sabbath; you were not even allowed to cook food. It was so important to the religious leaders to obey these laws that they had forgotten that loving and serving God is the most important rule of all.
3. A man with a shrivelled hand also came to the synagogue that day. Jesus knew the religious leaders would think healing a person was work, so you could not do it on the Sabbath. Therefore, Jesus asked them, "Is the Sabbath day to be spent doing good things for people or bad?" (3:3-4).
4. The religious leaders' hearts were hard, not kind. They cared more about their rules than about people's suffering, and they would not change. Jesus healed the man there and then (3:5). **Show Picture 17.**

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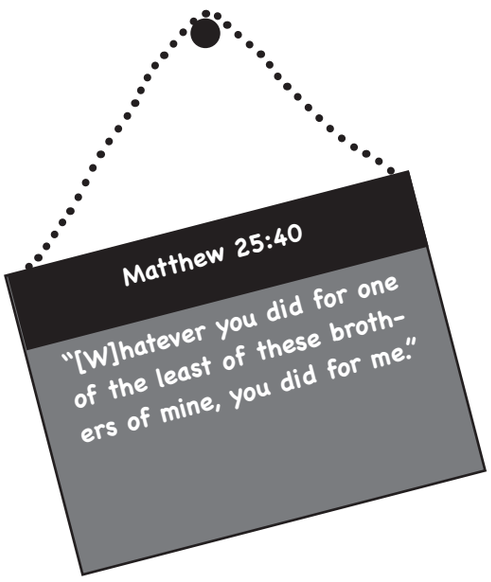


Those leaders were very religious, but they did not want to know how to worship God the way he wanted them to. Jesus showed and taught us God's will. The way we treat other people shows how we love God, because it is as if we are doing it to God himself.

Instil the Memory Verse

Our Response to the Story

Act the introductory play again, but this time let the child who is asked to help agree to do the work. He or she may either spend less time getting ready for choir practice and do the job before leaving for church, or agree to do it at another time.



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