Don’t You Forget About Me

Bible Story: Don’t You Forget About Me (the least of these) • Matthew 25:35-40
Bottom Line: Be kind to people who are overlooked.
Memory Verse: “Do to others as you want them to do to you.” Luke 6:31, NIrV
Life App: Kindness—showing others they are valuable by how you treat them.
Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Plug In: Focus the Energy (Small Groups, 10-15 minutes)
Focus the energy on today’s Bible story in a Small Group setting with an engaging discussion question and an interactive opening activity.

Before kids arrive, pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Ask God to help your kids understand how important it is to seek out the overlooked people in their lives and show kindness to them. Pray that God will open their eyes to all of the overlooked people around them. Ask God to help them be an example to others in the way that they show everyone how valuable they are.

1. Early Arriver Idea
What You Need: An offering container

What You Do:
Welcome students as they arrive and collect their offerings. Explain that as everyone comes in you’re going to all work on creating a fun group handshake together, with everyone adding a new part to it. As you welcome each person, talk about a time that they felt included in on something big, like having even a small part in a play or having one of their ideas chosen by someone as something a group or class might do. Discuss the following questions: How does it feel to be included? How does it feel to be overlooked? How can doing something silly like making a fun handshake help everyone to feel included? What are some other ideas like this?

★2. The 100 – copies provided
What You Need: “The 100” Activity Pages, pencils

What You Do:
Ask the group to take a guess as to how many people there are in the world (7 billion). After letting them answer, ask them to guess how many are in your town (find the answer to this ahead of time or look it up on a mobile device during Small Group). Finally, ask them to guess at how many people live in their immediate neighborhood or attend their school. Explore with them how each of those categories can create some kind of connection, such as how groups of people might focus only on certain types of music, go to certain restaurants, or spend time with certain people.

Hand out pencils and “The 100” Activity Page to each student. Explain that this is to help them realize the differences between the various people in the world, using the analogy of what it might look like if all statistics were in place but there were only 100 people on earth. As you read this, take note of their reactions. What stands out to them and why? Respond to the questions on the sheet together regarding how we can show kindness even in the midst of such diversity.
5-6 Challenge: Explain that with all of that diversity on earth, there are many organizations that have been created to help with some of the issues like hunger, clean water, and so on. Put kids into groups of two or three and challenge them to come up with an idea and a name for an organization that could show kindness to people with needs in their own community. For example, the group “Kindness Kids” makes sure that nobody eats lunch alone at school.

What You Say:
“Of course, the world is larger than 100 people, but you probably mean ‘the world’ to one person. Today we’re going to explore what it means to not overlook anyone as we follow Jesus. Kindness is showing others they are valuable by how you treat them. [Transition] Let’s go to Large Group and hear one of Jesus’ teachings on this idea.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Catch On: Make the Connection (Small Groups, 25-30 minutes)
Make the connection of how today’s Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. What I Like About You (review the Bible story / great for active learners)
What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:
Review the Bible story with students, asking them for their thoughts on what Jesus meant when He said that how we treat others is how we treat Him. Use the metaphor of their families, such as how the way they treat their siblings can affect their parents. Ask them if this is what they think Jesus means, or something else.

Next, have everyone make a circle, and ask for two volunteers to stand in the center and face each other. On your signal, one is to compliment the other while high-fiving that person. The other person has only a few seconds to compliment that person back, while also high-fiving that person back. This pattern goes on until someone runs out of something to say, to which another person in the circle can shout “TAG IN” and take that person’s place, resuming the compliments back and forth until someone else tags in. Play as many rounds as you’d like, ideally trying to get everyone in.

Finally, debrief your experience and talk about what made that fun or challenging. Talk about how they had to really dig deep in some situations to come up with a kind word to say, and how we can do this for the people in our lives who may need us to look hard to notice what they need a kind word or affirmation for.

5-6 Challenge: Challenge kids to use their mobile devices or social media accounts to send a compliment to someone who is overlooked every day this week. It doesn’t have to be the same person every day. If any kids don’t have mobile devices or social media accounts, encourage them to find other unique ways they can compliment those who are overlooked this week. Talk through some ideas together.
What You Say:
“This was not only a fun game, but I’m guessing God also used it to say something encouraging to someone here. He’s taken the time to make His love for us known through the Bible, and He wants us to share that love with each other. You can show others they are valuable by how you treat them. Even when we know this is important, we might not follow through and do it. [Apply] Maybe the key is like how, in this game, you may have felt inspired to compliment someone because you’d just been complimented. Similarly, in enjoying how Jesus has been kind to you first, you can become more inclined to [Impress] be kind to people who are overlooked.”

2. Cheat Sheets (application activity) – supplies provided
What You Need: Note cards, pencils
What You Do:
Hand out the note cards and pencils so every student has one of each. Spend a few moments brainstorming together the different categories in their life, such as: home, friends, school, neighborhood, world, extracurricular activities, and more. (Note: If someone mentions church, you can use this to affirm that church activities are a part of our lives, but as Christians, how we respond to following and believing in Jesus should show up in all those other categories as well. Our faith is not just something that shows up when we’re at church but something that should impact every area of our lives.)

Next, have them prepare to write down the top six areas that they feel take up most time in their lives. They’ll write three on one side of the card and three on the other side of the card, leaving a blank space under each category to write something else down.

Finally, brainstorm some of the different ways that each of these areas can use some added kindness to not overlook the needs of the people kids interact with in those areas. For example:

- Home: Call your grandparents on a weekly basis to tell them you love them.
- Neighborhood: Take care of a busy neighbor’s yard or garbage.
- School: Make a thank you card for staff members, from teachers to administration to administrative assistants to the custodial team.

Once the kids have completed their cards, give them the opportunity to share one idea with the group. Challenge them to carry this note card around with them all week long wherever they go as a mini-cheat sheet to prompt them to take action.

[Make It Personal] (Share about a time when you did something out of the ordinary for an overlooked person and you felt like it made that person’s day.)

What You Say:
“What if acts of kindness like this are how we can join Jesus in changing the world? [Apply] We would have to be as intentional about making sure it came across as more than good deeds, perhaps by telling people that you hope your actions remind them that God loves them. Show others they are valuable by how you treat them, especially making sure to [Impress] be kind to people who are overlooked.”
3. Different Voices (memory verse activity) This sounds fun if you are willing!

What You Need: Bibles, mobile device with MouthOff™ app preloaded (optional)

What You Do:
Have students sit in a circle and open up to Luke 6:31. Invite them to set their Bibles down so the reference is there if they need it, but only as a support. Instruct the group members to go around and say the memory verse out loud and naturally.

Next, have the kids go around the circle again saying the Bible verse, but each time using a different or funny voice. The goal is to make a unique voice that doesn’t sound like anyone else’s, such as a famous cartoon character or celebrity. Encourage everyone to have fun with this.

Optional: Along with the unique voices, a fun tech option is to use a mobile device with the MouthOff™ app. When you speak into the device, a cartoon mouth mimics your mouth movements.

What You Say:
“There are a lot of different people around us who need to hear the message of Jesus, but who may only pay attention when we find a way to enter into their world somehow. [Apply] Just like we changed our voices without changing the message, we can find ways to reach into the lives of the overlooked, whether we spend some intentional time with a quiet kid in our neighborhood or quit fighting with siblings and instead play something they’re interested in. This is another form of kindness as we choose to [Impress] be kind to people who are overlooked.”

If you lead mostly older kids, consider asking these discussion questions:
- What do you think the phrase “us versus them” means or implies? Are these words that bring people together or separate them? Why do you think this?
- Do you think it’s possible to try and be so considerate of another person’s feelings that it changes who you are in a bad way? Explain.
- When have you felt someone’s attention to you was just what you needed in that moment? Why did it make such a difference to you?
- What is something you think someone around you would like to tell you or talk more about if you’d give them the time for it?
- In what area of your life do you sometimes feel overlooked? What is one kind of kindness you’re hoping someone might show you? Describe how that would make you feel.

Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Puzzle pieces, pen (not provided)

What You Do:
Hand out the random puzzle pieces so each student has one, as well as a pen. Tell them this is to symbolize a unique person in their lives, and to note how one side of the puzzle piece has color to it and the other side is blank. Instruct them to think of this like two sides to that person, from the picture...
side that shows what we know of that person so far, to the underside and overlooked areas of their life that may need someone to show kindness to. **[Apply]** Give them a few moments to think about and write down an act of kindness that they can do this week to affirm what's noticeable in that person and invest in the unnoticeable.

**What You Say:**
"Dear God, teach us how to pray for the overlooked people in our lives, or the overlooked areas of the people we spend a lot of time with. We want to **[Impress]** be kind to people who are overlooked and show others they are valuable by how we treat them. We also invite You to speak into our lives in these ways so we know You never overlook us. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen!"
Imagine that the world was just made up of 100 people, and yet everything we know about life today was still the same. How would those 100 people represent the more than 7 billion people currently on earth?

A website called 100people.org explored this, and here is what they said would be true:

- 50 would be female. 50 would be male.
- 26 would be children and 74 adults, 8 of whom would be 65 and older.
- 60 Asians, 15 Africans, 14 people from the Americas, 11 Europeans.
- There would be 33 Christians, 22 Muslims, 14 Hindus, 7 Buddhists, 12 people who practice other religions, and 12 people who would not be aligned with a religion.
- 12 people would speak Chinese, 5 would speak Spanish, 5 would speak English, 3 would speak Arabic, 3 would speak Hindi, 3 would speak Bengali, 3 would speak Portuguese, 2 would speak Russian, 2 would speak Japanese. 62 would speak other languages.
- 83 would be able to read and write; 17 would not. 7 would have a college degree. 22 would own or share a computer.
- 77 people would have a place to shelter them from the wind and the rain, but 23 would not.
- 1 would be dying of starvation. 15 would be undernourished. 21 would be overweight.
- 87 would have access to safe drinking water. 13 would have no clean, safe water to drink.

(Source: http://www.100people.org/statistics_100stats.php)

Consider this:

👩‍💻 What is one group or category you would you be in?

👩‍💻 What is one group or category you would be tempted to overlook?

👩‍💻 What is one way you think kindness would be important?

What to Do:
Make one copy for each kid.