

## LEARNING AND LIVING THE BEATITUDES

### JOY Session

**OBJECTIVE:** To introduce the Beatitudes to JOY children as guidelines for how to live as followers of Christ.

#### PREPARATION:

- Become familiar with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) and the rest of Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7)
- Write each beatitude (9 or 10 total) written in large letters on individual pieces of paper, which will be used for a project at the end of the session.
- One poster board or cardstock paper for each child
- Markers or crayons ready
- Handout for each participant listing all the beatitudes (Matthew

#### OPENING PRAYER:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. O Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, everywhere present and filling all things, treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord. Amen.

**ICE BREAKER:** Have the group sit in a circle together. Encourage the group to join you in a steady clap. Call out children's names and have the class mimic the way you call them out. Make sure you call each child's name at least once. Try these various ways of announcing the names: whispering, shouting, singing, speaking in a low voice, speaking in a high voice, saying a name slowly or quickly, saying two names right after each other...etc.

#### DISCUSSION: Open by asking the group:

- What is a rule? (*A guide, directions for us to follow*)
- What kind of rules do you have to follow at home?
- What kinds of rules do you have to follow at school?
- How are these rules important? (*Allow children to answer. Ex: the rules make sure we will be safe at school, the rules help us to have order and organization at home, etc.*)
- Why do you think having rules is important? (*Safety, order, fairness, to make sure things get done, etc*)
- What happens when we don't follow the rules? (*People might get hurt, projects don't get completed, there's no order or organization, etc*)
- What happens when everyone follows the rules? (*Things usually run more smoothly, people are safer, etc*)
- What kind of rules has God given us to live by? (*10 Commandments, the Golden Rule, the Beatitudes, etc*)

*Note: The group will most likely know of the 10 Commandments and the Golden Rule, but probably not the Beatitudes*

*State in your own words:*

We have rules in our homes, our schools, and our society. Most rules exist not to make life more complicated or to make us feel bad, but to make life better. Rules are meant to have a positive effect on our lives by pointing us in the right direction.

The Beatitudes are "rules" or "suggestions" that Jesus gave to us as a good way of how to live. When Jesus was on earth, he gave a sermon, just like your priest gives on Sundays at church. He gave His sermon on a mountain so that lots of people could hear it. Because of this, we call it "The sermon on the Mount." Jesus told people what kind of things they to do in order to lead good lives, to be close to Him, and to go to the Kingdom of Heaven. He taught the Beatitudes, which describe ways we should act and some things that we can do in our lives to achieve happiness and be good Christians.

Just like the rules that our parents or teachers give us to follow, God has given us rules to follow. God has given us these ways of living because, like our parents and teachers, He wants us to live well and always do the right thing. This will help us to always be happy, and make others happy too.

**BRIDGE:**

At this point in the session, give each child in the circle a Beatitude written on a piece of paper (pre-made). If there are more children than Beatitudes, have some children work in pairs. Go around the circle and ask each child or group to read their Beatitude out loud. After they have read it, paraphrase it for them so that the kids will be able to understand it. Ask them what they think it means and allow them to share or expand about it.

*State in your own words:*

Each of the Beatitudes tells us something about what our ATTITUDE should BE. Each one starts with the word "blessed." One of the meanings of "blessed" is happy or joyful. This means that following God's Beatitudes will help us to be happy, and to make others happy as well.

**ACTIVITY:**

Give each participant a piece of poster board or card stock paper. Assign each child a letter:

C-H-R-I-S-T-'S    B-E-A-T-I-T-U-D-E-S

If there are more children than letters, have them work in pairs or groups. Instruct each child to write their Beatitude (that they had shared with the group earlier) on their letter. Allow them time to decorate these letters (maybe with

things that make them happy, or things that they do for others...) Hang these letters (in order) in the community center or somewhere where the congregation will be able to see.

**WRAP UP/ CHALLENGE:** Pass out the copies of the Beatitudes to each participant. Tell the group to take the handouts home with them and put them somewhere that they will see everyday. Challenge them to read them at the beginning of every day as a reminder to live our lives the way that God wants us to.

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. O Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, everywhere present and filling all things, treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord. Amen.