



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

DATE

January 24

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 5: 43-48

1. KNOW THE CONTEXT

The Books of Matthew is a collection of stories about the life and teachings of Jesus.

In this book Matthew shows us how important Jesus really is. He is God's Son come to live among the people He created and rescue us from our sins. Matthew also showcases Jesus as the greatest teacher of all time. His teachings stand as some of the most important lessons the world has ever seen.

In the passage for today Jesus is in the middle of a long teaching known as the Sermon on the Mount. In this Sermon Jesus is taking well known teaching from his day and revealing a new and deeper perspective. In our passage Jesus is explaining how he defines love and how people who follow him should practice loving others.

This message from Jesus can sometimes feel impossible, but it has tremendous power to transform our relationships.

2. READ THE BIBLE PASSAGE TOGETHER

3. SPEND TIME IN OBSERVATION

Which verses, ideas, or characters stuck out to you?

What questions could come from this passage?

Observation notes:

Questions:

4. SPEND TIME IN INTERPRETATION

What did this passage mean to the original audience?

What would it have felt like to be a character in this passage, and who in the passage is the hero/role model (if any)?

What's the main point of this passage?

Questions	Answers
Who is your enemy?	An enemy is anyone who we are in conflict with. This could be a friend at school, a sibling, a teacher.
Why should we love our enemies?	Partly because this is what God has done for us. He has loved us even though we walk away from him. And also, because there is more reward in love than there is in hatred. When we love our enemies we build relationship instead of tearing it down.
What if an enemy is destructive and harmful?	Loving someone does not mean that you tolerate their behavior all the time. Sometimes the best way you can love someone is by distancing yourself from them for your safety and their health.
Is Jesus saying that we shouldn't be nice to our friends?	Not at all! Jesus is pointing out that treating someone like an enemy by hating them isn't the best way to live. So, He invites us to love everyone even if loving them is difficult.

5. SPEND TIME IN APPLICATION

What is the "universal truth" God wants to teach us from this passage?

How can we apply the message of this passage to our daily lives?

Who are the enemies in your life?

What are some ways you can think to flip the script and love your enemies?

Are you an enemy to someone else? How can you ask for forgiveness?

6. PRAY

Follow-up notes: