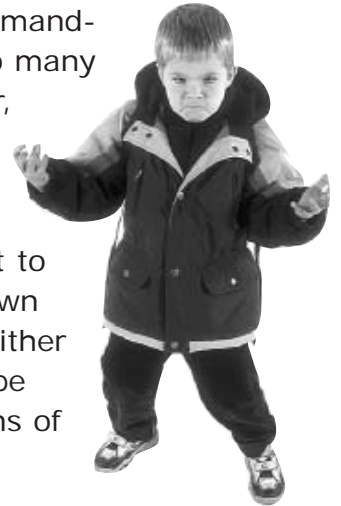


Children's Lesson Eight

What's Anger Got To Do With It?

PURPOSE

The emphasis of this lesson is on Jesus' interpretation of the sixth commandment found in Matthew 5:21-22. Murder may be a foreign concept to many children. Many probably play computer/video games dealing with war, spying, or killing, but for children the concept of murder is in the realm of the abstract, the type of thinking that many students don't enter until fifth grade or later. For this lesson, then, the focus is the emotion behind murder. When Jesus said "Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment" in Matthew 5:22, he was dealing with the emotions that tear down someone. The words used and the emotions and intent of the words can either build people up or tear them down. The children need to realize they can be lifesavers instead of life takers just by the words they use and the intentions of their words.



OBJECTIVES

The children will:

- Be introduced to the sixth commandment.
- Be introduced to the concept of anger and how it relates to this commandment.
- Examine ways they can handle their anger in appropriate ways

SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:13
- Matthew 5:21-22

WHAT YOU NEED

- Commandment Crest and sixth badge
- Individually wrapped lifesavers, eight per child
 - Ribbon, string or small cord 12" to 16" long.
- Copies of Rage Reactors worksheet
- Copy of sixth commandment to place on bulletin board
- A copy of the story for each child
- Stapler
- Set of jacks
- Masking tape
- Bean bag

SETTING THE SCENE

1. **Commandment Crest.** Let the students place commandment six on their Commandment Crests.

2. **Lifesavers.** Give each child a Lifesaver and tell them the story behind the lifesaver candy. **The person who invented the Lifesaver was concerned that children would be eating this new candy. At first it was just a solid piece of candy. He knew if children accidentally swallowed the candy while it was still whole, they could choke. So he thought and thought about what he could do to prevent this from happening. He decided he would put a hole in the middle of it so if anyone choked air could still come through while they tried to get the candy out. Thus, the hole in the candy was born and it was given the name Lifesaver because the hole could be a lifesaver.**

We can be lifesavers too. How do you think we can do that? How can we as Christians save lives? (By building people up, by making them feel good about themselves, not making them feel bad about themselves. By using good words and actions even when angry.)

3. **Memorization games.** Because the children should be memorizing the commandments and because they are half way through the series, a review of the commandments will be built into the lessons from this lesson on. A couple of review games that can be played are jacks and hopscotch.

A. **Commandment Jacks.** Groups of two or three children work best for this activity. Start with several jack sets around the room. Include only the number of jacks corresponding to the number of commandments for review. For example, to review only the first five commandments, have five jacks available for pick up. To review the first six commandments, six jacks, and so on. Teach the children how to play jacks. Bounce the ball and pick up one jack. After the child has picked up the first jack he or she recites the first commandment. If the child is able to do this, he or she should toss the ball again and grab two jacks and then say the second commandment. If the children cannot say the commandment by memory, reinforce the commandment by letting them use the bulletin board or the Ten Commandment Worksheet from lesson two. Also if they cannot say the commandment, the next person in the group has a chance to review the commandments.

B. **Commandment Hopscotch.** Groups of two or three children work best for this activity. With masking tape, create a hopscotch layout on an open area of the floor. Each student needs a bean bag or small marker to toss. Create the hopscotch with only the number of commandments you want to review. The first five commandments should have five boxes arranged appropriately, the review of seven commandments will have an hopscotch with seven boxes, etc. Teach the children how to play hopscotch. They toss the bean bag to number one, then hop up the hopscotch board. On the way back, they pick up the bean bag and say the commandment corresponding to the block number. If they can say the commandment by heart, they continue the game by tossing the bean bag to square number two. If they cannot say it by memory, reinforce the commandment by letting them see the bulletin board or a piece of paper with the commandments on them. If they cannot say the commandment by memory, the next person in the group gets a turn.

These two memory games can be played for any of the rest of the lessons also.

TRANSITION

Place the sixth commandment on the bulletin board and repeat with the children. Say **Let's see what The Commandment Kids have to say about the sixth commandment, "you shall not murder."**

STORY

Distribute the story. Have the children act out or read the story or, for the younger children, tell the story to the class.

QUESTIONS

1. **Do any of you have a friend like Sue Helen or know a person like Sue Helen? If so, what is it like to be around them?**
2. **We all get angry from time to time, so what was Sue Helen doing that made it bad for all?** (When she was angry she took it out on everyone around her. She made all of her friends feel bad by saying mean things to them and being angry with them.)
3. **What do you do when you get angry?**
4. **The Commandment Kids were lifesavers not life takers like Sue Helen. What did they do to be lifesavers?** (They tried to understand Sue Helen and what was going on in her life. They also took time to talk with Sue Helen even when she was mean to them.)
5. **How can you be a lifesaver this week?** (All sorts of answers are possible for this question: be a friend, say kind words, help someone out, etc.)

TRANSITION

We have seen that we all get angry, but what we do when we are angry is important. We have a couple of activities to help remind you this week to be a lifesaver and try to watch your anger so that you don't sin in your anger.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Rage Reactors.** The children need to understand that anger in itself is not sinful, but what is done with that emotion is what can cause problems. Many times children can use other activities to diffuse anger until it goes away. For this activity, use the Rage Reactors worksheet included in this lesson. Have the students fill out activities they can do to help them when they get angry. You may want to discuss what you do when you get angry, so that you don't sin. For example, some may hit a pillow, go for a walk, talk to a friend, etc. Help the children begin to understand they can do things to help the anger go away, so that they can deal effectively with the situation causing the anger.

2. **Lifesaver Chain.** Give each student three pieces of string, ribbon, rope, etc. Tie one end with a slipknot so all the ends are together. Tape that end down on a table or other hard surface. Begin braiding the ribbon. After a few braids slip a Lifesaver on the middle string and continue to braid. Do this until seven Lifesavers have been woven into the braid. Tie the end of the braid with a knot. Let the children take it home to remind them that they are to be lifesavers, not life takers, when they get angry.

A variation for this activity would be for the students to braid three strings three-quarters of the way down the length and tie a slip knot, leaving the string ends hanging. Then staple seven individually wrapped Lifesavers onto the braid. Tell the children that they can have one Lifesaver a day for the next week if they promise they will be lifesavers and not life takers. Now on the hanging strings write God on a piece of paper and attach it to one string, attach a paper with the child's name on another string, and the word love on the third string. This will remind the children that with God and love working together within them, they can be lifesavers this week.

Repeat the memory verse for the day one more time, then encourage the children to begin memorizing the seventh commandment.

End with a prayer.

STORY

- Narrator: Geoffrey and T.J. were out at recess, playing basketball when the ball got away from Geoffrey and interfered with the four square game going on next to them. Geoffrey knew he was going to get yelled at because Sue Helen was playing the game. She was a mean girl, angry at everyone and she didn't care whose feelings she hurt when she got mad.
- Sue Helen: (Yelling at the top of her lungs) Geoffrey what do you think you're doing messing up our game with your stupid basketball. If you can't keep it on the court, I'm going to tell the principal so he can just get rid of that old basketball goal. Besides, I don't know why you even bother to play. You're no good at it. Give it up.
- Geoffrey: (Running for the ball and bowing his head in embarrassment) Oh, Sue Helen, you know everybody has the same rights you do to play whatever they want as long as it isn't bothering anyone else.
- Sue Helen: Well, it is bothering me and my friends here, right?
- Narrator: The other girls playing with Sue Helen hung their head in embarrassment also. They knew Sue Helen could be mean if she wanted to. All of them knew how Geoffrey felt, because Sue Helen had yelled at them too. It seemed that whenever Sue Helen got mad, she made everyone around her feel bad. Geoffrey grabbed the ball and ran back toward the basketball goal while staring at Sue Helen and wondering why she acted the way she did.
- T.J.: Geoffrey, who in the world is that girl? And why did she yell at you like that?
- Geoffrey: T.J., that is the meanest girl in the school. Her name is Sue Helen and she is just mad at the world. You need to try to stay away from her. She especially likes to pick on new kids.
- T.J.: After hearing her yell at you, I think I'll stay as far away from her as possible.
- Narrator: That day after school, The Commandment Kids were sitting under the oak tree when Geoffrey walked up and sat down. His face looked sad and he seemed to be quieter than usual.
- Kassy: What's going on? Why the long face?
- Geoffrey: Sue Helen.
- Narrator: All of The Commandment Kids understood when he said that name. And they shook their heads in agreement, wondering why she acted the way she did.

Charlotte: The other day I was working on my science fair project and she said it was the worst one she had ever seen and that I probably would not get any type of ribbon for it.

Narrator: Geoffrey then told the kids about what happened to him at recess.

Chelsea: One time when I wore my new pink cashmere sweater, you know the one I bought downtown with my own money, she said I looked awful in it. Can you believe that? Everyone knows pink is my color. She made me feel bad.

Geoffrey: There has to be some reason why she is so mean. I just don't know what it is.

Narrator: The next week seemed really hard on Sue Helen. She screamed at her little sister while walking to school. She made rude comments about the cafeteria food to the cooks. She even said something rude under her breath about her teacher. Nobody wanted to be around her. People felt bad about themselves when they were around her. Later at the club The Commandment Kids were discussing this very person.

T.J.: I don't know Sue Helen very well, but I sure don't want to be around her after everything I have seen and heard this week.

Chelsea: I was reading the Ten Commandments in my Bible again this week. I'm trying to memorize them. It struck me that we have a commandment about this very subject. It is the sixth commandment, "You shall not murder."

Frankie: What does not murdering someone have to do with Sue Helen? I can imagine that someone might want to say some mean words to hurt Sue Helen, but I don't think anyone wants to murder her.

Chelsea: Well, it's not only that commandment, but what Jesus said about the commandment. See, look in Matthew 5:21 and 22; "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool' will be in danger of the fire of hell." I asked my mom what that meant and she said it is okay to be angry sometimes, but you need to watch your actions and words when angry. I think that is Sue Helen's problem. She is angry, very angry about something and she is taking it out on everyone around her, and she will be judged because of this.

Frankie: I see your point. When we put other people down, say mean things to them, make them feel bad, we are hurting them. When someone feels bad about themselves a little part of them goes away. Our hurtful words can be as bad as murdering someone.

Geoffrey: Wow, I never thought about that. I think we need to pray for Sue Helen and pray that God will show us a way to understand and talk to her about this.

Narrator: All those present agreed to this and they began to pray for Sue Helen. Later that week, Chelsea called an emergency meeting of The Commandment Kids. All were present at this important meeting.

Chelsea: I'm so glad all of you could come after school today. I think I know what is going on with Sue Helen. I heard my parents talking last night, after they thought I went upstairs to bed. Sue Helen's parents are getting a divorce and her dad has already moved out. Her parents are really worried about Sue Helen because she is very angry about this. They really don't know what to do about it. I think we need to be a friend to Sue Helen if we can. What do you think? I know how I would feel if I was in Sue Helen's position.

Narrator: The other Commandment Kids were not as willing to forgive Sue Helen so quickly. Each one of them had been affected by Sue Helen's anger, but after they talked about it they all agreed to try to be a friend to Sue Helen. Over the next couple of weeks, The Commandment Kids really tried hard to help Sue Helen not be so angry. They helped her in any way they could. Sue Helen noticed and decided to find out what was going on. She saw The Commandment Kids after school one day and decided to ask them about it.

Sue Helen: So what gives, you goody-two shoes. Why are you being so nice and helpful to me?

Geoffrey: Let me ask you a question. Why are you so mad all of the time?

Sue Helen: I'm not mad. I just have to deal with dumb stuff all of the time.

Chelsea: You know it is okay to be angry sometimes, but you need to be careful what you do when you are angry. You can hurt yourself or other people with your words or actions.

Sue Helen: Yeah, so what if I'm angry. Who gives a care?

Chelsea: I do. We all do. (Chelsea said as she stretched out her hand to include all of The Commandment Kids.)

Narrator: What Sue Helen did next surprised all of The Commandment Kids. She began to cry. And she cried and cried and cried. The Commandment Kids took her to the big old oak tree to see if they could figure out what to do next.

Chelsea: I know why you might be angry all of the time. Is it because of your parents?

Sue Helen: How did you know about that?

Chelsea: I heard my parents talking about it. They said your mom and dad are upset because they don't know what to do with you.

Sue Helen: Yeah, why don't they think about what they are doing-getting a divorce. Why shouldn't I be mad? I have every right to be mad.

Geoffrey: I agree, but it is what you are doing with your anger that is bad. You are making everyone around you feel bad too. You know when I am mad, I go in the backyard in my tree house and hit a pillow.

Frankie: When I am mad, I go out in the open field behind me and kick the football as hard as I can and that helps me not be so angry anymore, then I can go and do something about what made me angry in the first place.

Sue Helen: I know you are right that I should find a way to get rid of my anger, but I don't know how.

Kassy: I like to go and turn my music on and I air guitar until I can't stand up anymore.

T.J.: Sometimes I yell into a paper sack.

Geoffrey: Jesus said that we need to be careful with our words so that when we are angry we don't tear people down, we don't make them feel bad when we are angry.

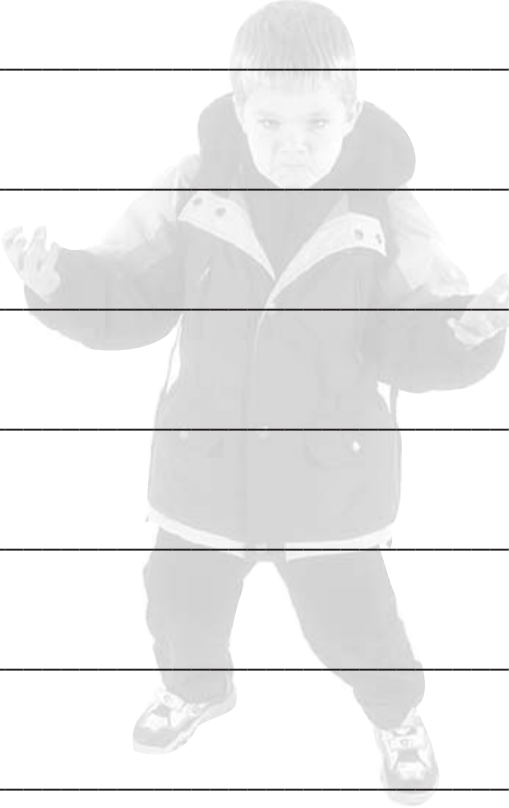
Sue Helen: I owe all of you an apology. I have been so mean to you all; yelling and saying bad things to you. Will you forgive me? I will try to do something with my anger instead of being mean to others.

Narrator: All of The Commandment Kids forgave Sue Helen of her actions while angry and promised to help her with her anger. Chelsea even suggested she go talk to her mom and dad about why she was so angry, something Sue Helen had never thought to do. Before long Sue Helen seemed much better. Every now and then Sue Helen's voice could still be heard over all of the noise on the playground when a ball interfered with her four square game, but she was getting better. The Commandment Kids learned a valuable lesson about anger and how to deal with it.



RAGE REACTORS

On the following lines, write some activities you can do when you are angry this week so that you will not become a life taker.



You shall not murder.

- Exodus 20:13

B_e a life saver!