

Questions for Cubs

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

Lesson

Showing Grace to Others

Key Verse

“Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.” (Luke 6:31)

Ear Check (*Story Comprehension*)

- Q: When Staci delivers cookies to Miss Grissel, what happens?
A: *Miss Grissel sends her away without taking the cookies*
- Q: What does Miss Harbor tell the class that they should give when someone is rude?
A: *Grace*
- Q: Who is the substitute teacher for Miss Harbor?
A: *Miss Grissel*
- Q: What does Paw Paw Chuck tell The Club they need to have with Miss Grissel?
A: *Patience*
- Q: Who was accidentally locked in the closet?
A: *Miss Harbor*

Heart Check (*Spiritual Application*)

- Q: Why do we need to be kind to people who are mean to us?
- A: God created us to live in relationships—with Him and with other people. In fact, Jesus said that the most important things we do are loving God and loving each other (Luke 10:27). We are brothers and sisters in Christ—part of His family (Mark 3:34–35). God commands us to help, encourage, and give to each other (John 13:34; Romans 12:10; Hebrews 10:24). Unfortunately, the world tells us that we should look out for ourselves first, and then *maybe* for the people we love. The more we live that way, putting ourselves first, the further away we move from the life of peace, joy, and love that God has intended for us.

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But some people are harder to love than others. Some people, like Miss Grissel, have become bitter and mean because of the hard things life has dealt them. They have *chosen* to be sour and angry, but they feel they are justified because they have been hurt. They need to be loved, to experience the acceptance and kindness that they no longer believe exists. They need to see that there is another way to live, another way to think. And they may never find their way out of this bitterness without our help. So be patient and kind. Try to understand their hurt and anger. And above all, love them, just as Jesus has loved you.

Q: What if I am the bitter person? How can I stop being so angry about how life has turned out for me?

A: We live in a sinful, broken, hurting world. And some have truly suffered more than their share of pain and heartache. If this is true for you, you must not allow yourself to be alone in your suffering. Be vulnerable and share your hurt with a close, trusted friend. Then allow him or her to comfort you. God has given us to each other for that very purpose (2 Corinthians 1:4–7)! Your pain may not make sense to you until it is explained by Christ Himself in heaven, but until then you need to be loved and comforted by other believers. And remember, God will make something of value, even something beautiful out of your suffering (Romans 8:28). It may feel safer to be angry, and it may feel like you are in control if you are bitter, but the reality is you are just hurting yourself. You are robbing yourself of both healing and joy (Galatians 5:22–23).

“I” Check (*Personal Application*)

1. When someone treats you unkindly, what is your first reaction? Why do you think some people are mean? Do you think they are mean all the time? Can you think of something you have done recently that would cause someone to think you are mean? How would you want others to treat you?
2. Look up the word *grace* in the dictionary. What are some synonyms or words that mean the same thing as grace?
3. Look up Luke 6:27–28. In your own words, describe what the Bible is teaching.
4. When you take the opportunity to extend grace to others, how does it make you feel? Make a list of people to whom you think that you need to show grace. What can you do this week to show them grace?

Director's Notes

The world is full of damaged and hurting people. I'm one of them, and you are too. Though some suffer far more than others, no one is free from the pounding waves of life (Matthew 5:45). They crash over us in the form of disappointments, betrayals, or physical suffering. When these waves hit, they seem like the most important things in our lives. In reality, the most important thing is *not* that we have been hit but how we respond to being hit. We can choose how we will act, react, and even think when disaster strikes. Some have endured a lot and have come out with a deep and quiet joy. They are optimistic about the future, and they are generally a pleasure to be around. Others have undergone the same experiences and emerged angry, hopeless, and bitter. They try to build imposing, emotional defenses against the crashing waves of life. Unfortunately, those same defenses can often create emotional isolation. People think they are being strong when they are really angry and cynical. It feels safe. These people feel that their job is to make you see the world in the same depressing way they do. We typically avoid them at all costs. The irony is that this second group—the grumpy, sullen pessimists—actually need us the most. I would recommend, however, that we not try to convince them to change their attitude. That is futile. They've spent every waking moment rehearsing all of the reasons why they are correct and justified in their misery. They are, after all, realists. If we become angry at them, we simply confirm their point. No, the only way to deal with people like this is to see them the way Jesus did. Not just as angry, unpleasant people, but as human beings who are wounded and confused. I suggest that we love them—and attempt to enjoy them even if they make it hard. One of the great mysteries in the Bible is that our love for the unlovely is the one thing their defenses cannot withstand. It may take a lot longer to see a change than you would like, but this kind of love is powerful.

Now a word of caution: the first time we are kind and show love to bitter people, it might annoy them. If we keep it up, they might actually become angry and do everything in their power to get us to be rude in return. We must not give in. The more love we show, the more aggravated they can become. But that is simply because they're confused. We're showing them a new truth. We're challenging their very worldview. We're showing them that bad treatment, aggravation, and outright abuse do not need to result in bitterness. It is here, in our weakness, that Christ can most clearly show His strength—but we must be unwaveringly committed to this kind of weakness (2 Corinthians 12:10). For the sake of our bitter friends who need to be saved, we must not let anyone disarm us of this “weakness”!

We all know that some will never come around. They either don't want to give up their comfortable misery, or they can no longer see beyond the walls of isolation built around them. For those who do, however, the transformation can be dramatic. In the final stage, bitter people begin to realize that the life we have been displaying to them, the love we have been showing to them, may just be real. They will continue to test us, but less harshly now because they really want it to be real. They want it for us, and they desperately want it for themselves. It may come in a flash or swell up slowly like the tide, but one day it will finally be clear to them that there really is peace to be had, hope to wake up to, and joy to experience. These are the things they have wanted all along but didn't recognize. And then, perhaps we who have suffered at their hands will be able to tell them that the things they want so badly—peace and joy and hope—are from Christ. He came to save us from sin, that sickness which drags us down (Mark 2:17). He saves us from things like addictions and unforgiveness, anger and bitterness. With this saving knowledge, their long-neglected souls will actually start to grow. With a continued pursuit of Christ, they will find that there is much freedom to be had—that finally their formerly bitter hearts can be so free, so joy-filled, and so hopeful that they are ready to commit to a certain kind of weakness in order for some other sad and bitter person to be shown the love of Christ.



David B. Carl
Creative Director
Paws & Tales