**Topic: Loving Those In Need**

**Bible Passage: Matthew 25:31-46**

**Activity**: **Peanut Butter & Jelly Challenge**

Prepare 3 stations for the Peanut Butter and Jelly Challenge. You will need for each station: two slices of bread in a Ziploc bag, jar of peanut butter, jar of jelly, knife of other utensil to spread, a plate, and a blindfold.

Find 3 volunteers to be the Sandwich makers. Have them stand at one of the stations and secure their blindfold. Choose 2 students to be assistants at Station 2 and 2 more students to be assistants at Station 3. Explain that each Sandwich maker, one at a time, will be given 90 seconds to make a Peanut Butter & Jelly sandwich that consists of 2 slices of bread with peanut butter and jelly on each slice. Then explain that each will have to do it blindfolded.

**Here is the Catch:**

Station 1: Give 90 seconds to complete the sandwich but no one can help at all. Not even talking to the person.

Station 2: Give 90 seconds to complete the sandwich but this time the 2 helpers can assist by giving verbal directions. They cannot touch or help in any other way.

Station 3: Give 90 seconds to complete the sandwich but the 2 helpers can do anything in their power to assist in the process. This includes making the sandwich themselves, but don’t tell them!

**After the activity, ask the following questions:**

* Which station was the hardest? Why?
* Which station was the easiest? Why?
* God has called us to serve others as our way of helping them to see who He is, do you think God wants us to be like Station 1—no help, Station 2—all talk, or Station 3—everything we can to help and serve them?
* What are some needs that people have that we could be helpful with? (Food, shelter, love, friendship, message of Jesus Christ)
* What are some ways that we can help with these things?

We are called by God to love those that are in need. There are people all around us. They are in your neighborhood, at your school, on your team—and they are hurting. They might look different or act different, but they are good people with good hearts. The truth is “most people just don’t take the time to see it.” As followers of Jesus Christ, it is our responsibility to love and serve those people. It is our duty to be the ones that will show them love and care, just like Jesus would.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was by a teacher of the law, his response was,

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:29-31)

When we think of these people who are maybe different than us, we must remember that Jesus has commanded us to love them as we love ourselves. We are to love them, care for them, and think of them in the same way that we would for ourselves. Maybe it’s an encouraging word to someone who is down, maybe it’s buying a meal for someone who is hungry, maybe it’s tutoring someone who’s struggling with a subject, or maybe it’s just being a friend to someone who has no friends. We are to be the hands and feet of Jesus, taking the good news to those who we can serve and love.

**Break into small groups and read Matthew 25:31-40**

Make sure that small group leaders reinforce the message of this passage. The purpose of Jesus’ comments is to teach on the judgment that is coming. Jesus’ statement illustrates the difference between believers and non-believers. Those who love Jesus will also love others. Jesus wanted his followers, including us, to understand that we are called to love and serve those in need when we are able to do so.

**Discussion Questions:**

* What/Who does Jesus mean when he says “least of these”?
* When we help others, whom are we actually helping? How is this so?
* How would your life need to change in order to do what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25—feed, clothe, and love others?
* Who are some of the people (not specific names) that might have needs in our schools? In our community? In our church? What are their needs?
* What are some ways that you/we can serve those in need in our schools? In our community? In our church?

In your own mind and heart, think of who comes to mind in your school or community that would be “the least of these”? Take a minute or two to ask God what you can do this week to love and serve that person. Write down what God lays on your heart and challenge yourself to follow through with the action this week.