

WONDERFULLY LOVED

Key Concept

God has chosen each one of us to be his. He has made us like him and he has made us unique. We get to make choices too. We can choose to love others just as Jesus loves us. We can choose to be kind.

Key Scripture

*God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people.
So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.*

COLOSSIANS 3:12 (CEV)

Preparation and Supplies

You will need

- ☐ An A4 size sheet of cardboard for each group of 5 or 6 children
- ☐ 5mm ribbon or wool in at least three different colours
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tape

Prepare

- ☐ Print copies of the Bible story for the children to read – you will need one of each highlighted copy and several without highlighting
- ☐ Print copies of the 'Choose Kind' chart – one per child (page 7)
- ☐ Cut the ribbon or wool into pieces (about 25cm long) – each child will need three pieces in different colours (page 8)



Connecting in

Over the last few weeks we have been reminded that we are all included by God, that we are made alike in him and that we also have unique differences. Today we will think about the choice God has made to love us and the choices that we make as we interact with others.

Activity - Choices

Choose one side of your space to represent a **YES** response and the other side to represent a **NO** space. Explain to the children which side is **YES** and which is side **NO**.

Every day we make choices. We make lots of choices, although we often don't realise that we are making them. I wonder how many choices you have already made today.

I'm going to say some choices that you might have already made this morning. If it is a choice that you have made today, then run to the **YES** side of the room. If it is not a choice that you have already made today then run to the **NO** side of the room.

- Did you make a choice to get out of bed this morning?
- Did you make a choice about which way to drive to church?
- Did you make a choice about what to wear?
- Did you make a choice about whether or not you would play this game?

Memory Verse Activity

*God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people.
So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.*

COLOSSIANS 3:12 (CEV)

Divide the children into teams of 5 or 6. Ensure that you have a mix of ages in each group. Ask each group to choose a captain.

Give each captain a sheet of paper and a marker. Ask the captains to line up at one end of your space. The remaining team members must stand in a line at the opposite side of the space.

The first team member must run to their captain and write the first word of the verse then return to the line. The second team member will then run up and write the second word. Continue until the whole verse has been written. The captain may help their team members with the verse.

When everyone has finished, ask each team to read the verse out loud in the order that they finished.



2nd

1st



Team Leader

The Main Thing

There are many stories in the Bible about times when Jesus 'chose kind'. Can you think of any stories where Jesus chose kind? Let's look at one of them now...

Dramatic reading – Jesus and Levi

Choose children to be:

- Jesus (speaking part)
- Levi
- Narrator (speaking part)
- A Pharisee (speaking part)
- Several other Pharisees
- Several other tax collectors
- Several of Jesus' disciples

Give the children copies of the story with their parts **highlighted**. Allow them a few minutes to look over the story. (Page 8)

Ask the children to read and act out the story.

Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, "Come with me." Levi left everything and went with Jesus.

In his home Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax collectors and other guests were also there.

The Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of Moses grumbled to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with those tax collectors and other sinners?" Jesus answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to invite good people to turn to God. I came to invite sinners."

Luke 5: 27-32 (CEV)

Discussion – Jesus and Levi

What do you think this story is about?

The tax collectors in the time of Jesus were hated by most people in the community. They not only collected the taxes that the Romans demanded, they added some more that they kept for themselves. Many of them were greedy and they became rich while others suffered from paying the high taxes.

People did not want to hang out with tax collectors – they had few friends. They were definitely not part of the 'in' crowd. They were not often invited out to dinner or even spoken to. People avoided them or gave them dirty looks if they passed them in the streets. Nobody took 'selfies' with them. Nobody chose them to be on their team. But Jesus not only talked to Levi the tax collector, he went and hung out with him. He ate dinner with Levi – which was a big deal and he even hung out with all the other tax collectors that Levi invited. Jesus didn't just give him a smile

and a wave as he walked by – he spent time with him. He wasn't just friendly, he was a friend.

What do you think the difference is between being friendly and being a friend?
Think about these ideas as I read them out.

Show **THUMBS UP** if it's something a **FRIENDLY** person would do.

Put your **HANDS UP** if it's something a **FRIEND** would do.

- Hang out during the holidays
- Wave across the playground
- Say 'Hi'
- Share an 'in' joke
- Invite you home after school
- Smile
- Include you in the group
- Invite you to their birthday party

Can you think of any characters in 'Wonder' (PALACIO, 2012) who were friendly but not a friend to Auggie?

Can you think of any people who have been friendly but not a friend to you?
Can you think of anyone that you have been friendly but not a friend to?

Jesus took a big risk when he hung out with Levi. He knew that spending time at Levi's house would make him really unpopular with the 'in' crowd. But Jesus also knew that Levi needed a friend more than anyone else in the crowd. He chose not to just be friendly but to be a friend. He chose kind.

³² If you love only someone who loves you, will God praise you for that? Even sinners love people who love them. ³³ If you are kind only to someone who is kind to you, will God be pleased with you for that? Even sinners are kind to people who are kind to them.

³⁵ But love your enemies and be good to them. Lend without expecting to be paid back. Then you will get a great reward, and you will be the true children of God in heaven. He is good even to people who are unthankful and cruel.

LUKE 6:32-33, 35 (CEV)

When we are young it can feel like we don't get to make many decisions – it can feel like someone is always telling us what we must or must not do.
This makes it even more important for us to make good choices whenever we are faced with a decision.

Although it might feel like others are always telling us what to do, how to behave, or how to think, we make choices. We make choices to obey or disobey. We make choices to listen or ignore. We make choices to join in or to refuse. We make choices to be friendly or to be a friend. We make choices to be kind or unkind.

Memory Verse Activity

Ask the children to say the memory verse.

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people.

So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.

COLOSSIANS 3:12 (CEV)

God has chosen each one of us to be his. He has made us like him and he has made us unique. We get to make choices too. We can choose to love others just as Jesus loves us. We can choose to be kind.

Jesus showed us how to choose kind. He showed us what it means to love others – no matter what. He asks us to follow his example but we still have to choose.

When we choose to love others like this, they see Jesus in us. They begin to learn what Jesus is like. When we love them we let them know that they are valued for who they are as they live out the unique purpose God made them for.

Will you choose to love others? Will you choose kind?

Will you choose to accept yourself and others as wonders... made by the God of wonders?

Tying In

Create your own 'Choose Kind' chart.

Think about the times during the week when you find it difficult to choose kind or the people you find it difficult to love. Make a decision now to choose kind. Fill in your chart with nine things you will do this week to choose kind.

As you do them, mark them off your chart. (Page 7)

Offer to help your mum or dad to cook	Give three people a compliment	Treat your siblings with respect
Hold the door for someone	Write a thank you note to someone who has done something nice for you	Say hello to someone who isn't your friend
Donate something you don't use anymore to charity	Help someone is having trouble with their schoolwork	Listen without interrupting

Prayer activity

Think of three people who you will choose to be kind to. Select a different coloured thread for each of these people.

Tie one end of each thread together to form a knot.

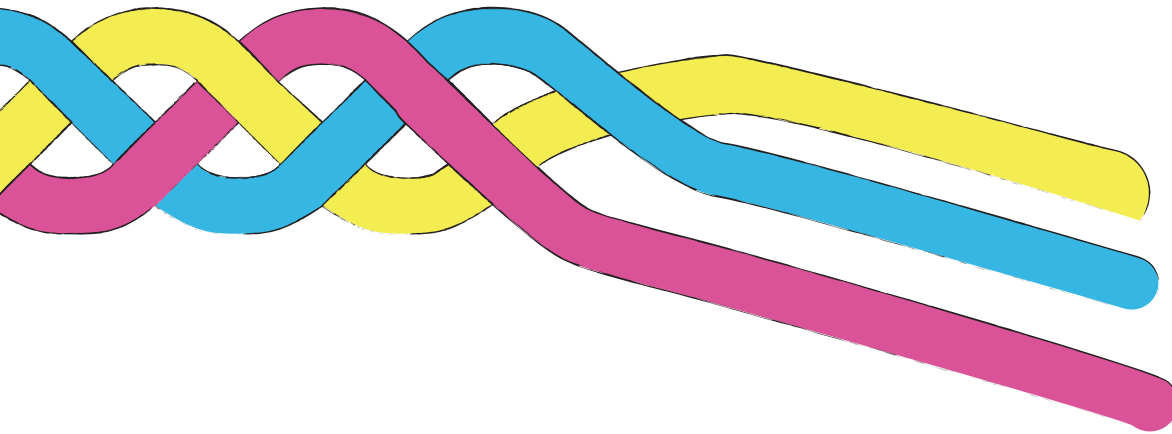
Use a piece of tape to secure the knotted ends in place while you work.

Plait the threads together to form a band.

As you plait the threads, tell God that you are choosing to be kind to these people and others. Ask him to help you to remember your promise. Ask him to make you strong when choosing becomes difficult.

Tie the band to your wrist or ankle or add it to the zipper on your pencil case or school bag.

Whenever you see it remember that you have chosen to be kind to those people and others



Choose Kind

Fill in your chart with nine things you will do this week to choose kind. As you do them, mark them off your chart.

- Offer to help your mum or dad to cook
- Give three people a compliment
- Treat your siblings with respect
- Hold the door for someone
- Write a thank you note to someone who has done something nice for you
- Say hello to someone who isn't your friend
- Donate something you don't use anymore to charity
- Help someone who is having trouble with their schoolwork
- Listen without interrupting
- Send a card to a friend telling them why they are special to you
- Treat your teachers with respect
- Stick up for a friend who is being mistreated
- Volunteer at a local organisation
- Look for the best qualities in the people you know
- Say hello to someone at school who isn't your friend
- Donate an item to charity
- Do the dishes
- Let your brother or sister go first
- Spend some extra time playing with your pet
- Help out with the gardening
- Use chalk to write encouraging messages on the footpath
- Bring flowers to your teacher
- Read a book to your younger brother or sister
- Pick up rubbish in the playground
- Choose not to complain today – no matter what
- Let someone go ahead of you in a line
- Forgive someone

Handout for dramatic Bible reading – Jesus and Levi

Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, **“Come with me.”** Levi left everything and went with Jesus. In his home Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax collectors and other guests were also there.

The Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of Moses grumbled to Jesus' disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with those tax collectors and other sinners?”

Jesus answered, **“Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn’t come to invite good people to turn to God. I came to invite sinners.”** LUKE 5: 27-32 (CEV)

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