



Posted on February 11, 2017
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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

For more information visit www.rfour.org/childrenstime.html

Written for Sunday, February 19, 2017

7th Sunday after Epiphany

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 5:38-48](#) [Summary: *Love Your Enemies By Praying*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies are needed, but before the worship service you may wish to speak with the child you plan to gently push (see below for details!)

ASK (a.k.a. *The On-Ramp*)

- Good morning.
- Have you ever been pushed on purpose or accidentally?
- Maybe like this? [*gently nudge your shoulder into the shoulder of the child who is sitting next to you*]
- When that happens, when you get pushed -- do you ever feel like pushing back?
- Yeah? You do? Me too!
- So let's pretend that just this once, you actually DID push back.
- [*motion towards or point at the child you just nudged*] -- Go ahead. Push me back! [*child pushes back*]
- Oh no no no! Now you've done it! [*lean into the child and nudge him/her again, then let him/her push you back one more time*]
- So let's pretend that we keep doing this -- And, let's pretend that every time one of us gets pushed, we push back harder than we were pushed.
- What do you think will happen? Our pushing would never stop, would it?
- And, our pushing would keep getting worse until one or both of us get hurt, don't you think?

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- So, for the pushing to stop, one of us would have to choose to **not** push back.

- And this is the very thing that Jesus is teaching his disciples in today's scripture story.
- Jesus is telling them, "Don't push back. Don't hit back."
- And then, he tells them what to do instead.
- Instead of hitting your enemies, Jesus tells his disciples to love their enemies.
- If you ask me, that sounds like a pretty tough thing to do.
- Which is why it's important to pay attention to the other thing Jesus says in today's story.
- Jesus also tells his disciples that they need to pray for their enemies.
- And what Jesus means, here, is that his disciples need to talk to God about how to love their enemies.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- By praying for their enemies, God will help the disciples see and know how they can respond without pushing or hitting.
- For example, maybe you [*point to the child you were gently "pushing" earlier*] went home and talked to God about how I kept pushing you.
- And while you tell God this and then are quiet about it and think about it, you have this thought about how I wasn't trying to hurt you; instead I just needed an example for today's children's time message.
- So, what I did still wasn't ok. And I should have asked you for help ahead of time.
- But by talking to God about my bad actions, you were able to see why I was doing what I was doing, which helped you know why you didn't need to push me back.
- This is the Good News for today: That when we invite God into our fights, God can help us see a way out of the fighting.
- Let's Pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God...

Dear God...

Help us to remember ...

Help us to remember ...

...that loving our enemies...

...that loving our enemies...

...starts with us...

...starts with us...

...talking and listening to you.

...talking and listening to you.

Thank you and Amen.