

Philippians 2:1-11

How Low Can You Go?

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

Memory Verse: Philippians 2:4 *"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*

Lesson Focus: As our memory verse says, this passage challenges us to lower ourselves and elevate the needs of others. But it doesn't do so without also taking us through how Jesus first did this in the most awe-inspiring way for us!

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd - 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Caring Hands Craft

Starter Activity: Limbo

Consider starting out the lesson with a silly game of "Limbo". We will leave a pool noodle in your class that you can use as the limbo stick. * Get all of the kids in a single-file line behind the stick and have them (one-at-a-time) walk under the stick by bending backwards. * If they touch the stick or anything but their feet touch the ground, they are out! If they make it under clean, then they go to the back of the line to try again the next round. Once every kid has had a chance to go through, then lower it and have them come through again. Repeat until you have a winner! * I would recommend starting the bar high enough so that all the kids can get through the first time without much trouble! Afterwards transition into the lesson with some discussion about what the kids were doing in this game:

I saw lots and lots of "bending over backwards" in this game! * I bet many of you have heard someone say they were "bending over backwards" for someone else.
Q: What do they mean by that? A: It means they are doing all they can to help and serve that person. I bet many of you have Moms that "bend over backwards" for you every day to make sure you are dressed and ready for school! *

As we continue in the book of Philippians, we are going to learn how important it is that Christians be willing to "bend over backwards" for others. But this is not just something that Christians do because they are told to. As we will see, this is something that God Himself demonstrated and did for us in the most amazing way. Let's take a look!

Bible Study:

Philippians 2:1a: Once again, when we begin reading any passage with the word, "Therefore", we must ask, "What is it **there for?**" Everything we are going to read today flows from what we read last week in the first chapter.

If you were here last week, you might remember how Paul challenged the Philippians (and us) to have "godly guts for the gospel". Paul's rallying cry (even while in prison) was "*to live is Christ, and to die is gain*" (**Philippians 1:21**). * This means that following Jesus can be hard sometimes, but...

Philippians 2:1b: But there is also great encouragement, comfort, and affection in following Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit! *

Philippians 2:2: And because of all these blessings Paul pleads with the believers in Philippi to be united, like-minded, or at peace with one another. I bet many of you are on sports teams. The goal of most sports teams is to win, right?

Q: What happens if the team is fighting among themselves? A: They'll NEVER win!

God's desire is the same for the church! Believers are to be united, fighting together to "win" people into His kingdom. This not only takes "godly guts" from each Christian, but it takes a TEAM effort!

Philippians 2:3-4: The church will achieve LIKE-mindedness when each Christian is dedicated to pursuing humble LOWLY-mindedness! The pursuit of humility is one of the most central teachings of the Bible! For "*God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*" (**1 Peter 5:5** and **James 4:6**) *

Let's revisit that Limbo game we played at the beginning. In that game not only were you challenged to "bend over backwards", but also to lower yourself! Imagine what the church would look like if Christians bent over backwards and lowered themselves for each other! Or imagine what your Sunday School class would like if each one of you lived this out! It would be the most attractive place in the world! Everyone would feel loved, known, appreciated, and cared for. The church would be a TEAM that regularly "wins" people into God's kingdom and family. *

Q: Is there a letter "I" in the word TEAM? A: NO! There isn't in the word CHURCH either! * (**Teachers:** Consider writing these words on the whiteboard)

Philippians 2:5: This is a tall order because our sin makes us all very selfish. But here is the amazing thing! God doesn't just tell us to be humble and unselfish, but He demonstrated it for us. As we are going to see in this next passage, Jesus, the TEAM captain, lowered Himself and "bent over backwards" for us! *

Philippians 2:6-7: We need to slow down and pause to truly understand how marvelous this is. First, we learn that Jesus has always been God. He has been God with the Father and the Holy Spirit (3 Persons, 1 God) even before time began. That means everything that is true about God is true about Jesus: all-powerful, all-knowing, all-majestic, all-holy, etc. In other words, He is God, the "**HIGHEST**"! *

Yet, we also learn that He Who is God "Most High" **LOWERED** Himself by becoming a human being. He was born into this world poor and of no reputation. He lived a truly human life and experienced many of the same things we experience (even temptation). * But He never sinned! WOW! But why did He do this? There is more...

Philippians 2:8: "God Most High" became "man most low" by willingly going to the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. He "bent over backwards" in the most **excruciating** way to rescue us from the punishment we deserve for our sins. *

Q: How many of you like Legos? Imagine yourself as the great "Master Designer" of a grand Lego universe. You create a Lego world and breathe life into the Lego people. But after some time, the Lego people make a mess of your world and the only way to rescue them is for you to "lower yourself" and enter in as a Lego person! This means that you will take on all the limitations of a Lego person (i.e. limited movements, Lego smile always on your face, etc. **Teachers:** Bring in a Lego character to demonstrate this or have a kid come up and demonstrate how Lego people move). You would be known as "LEGO-MAN" come to save them! *

Jesus isn't "LEGO-MAN". He is "GOD-MAN" come to rescue us! As **John 3:16** says, God loved us so much that He sent His Son into the world to be our Savior, lowering Himself and bending over backwards for us in the most breathtaking way!

Philippians 2:9: One of the last things Jesus said on the cross was, "*It is finished!*" He finished His mission, rose again victorious from the dead on the third day, and then went back on "HIGH" where He rules forever. *

Philippians 2:10-11: Now all are invited to "bend the knee" or LOWER themselves under the Almighty gracious hand of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world!

Key Point: I hope all of you understand a little bit better how magnificent Jesus is to have bent over backwards and lower Himself for YOU! Have you "bent the knee" and joined His TEAM yet? If you haven't, repent and believe in Him today while you still have a chance! *

If you are on His TEAM, He is your Coach and Captain and He wants you to follow * His example. As our memory verse says, "LOWER" yourself and consider the needs of others. Find ways to show humility this week in loving obedience of your Captain!

Bring It Home

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus:

*Greetings! Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

First

Read Philippians 2:8. In what ways did Jesus "bend over backwards" for us?

Second

Read 1 Peter 5:5-7. How does God respond to the proud?
How does He respond to the humble?

Parent Challenge

Read Philippians 2:4. Name one person that you can look out for the interests of this week. How could you do this?

By His Grace,

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