

THE BEATITUDES

A GAMES WORKSHOP written by Amy Crane

Note: Amy revised and improved this lesson and posted it in [the Writing Team's Beatitudes Games Workshop](http://www.rotation.org/forum/Beatitudes-Lessons) (open to supporting members)

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We're providing the original text of the lesson here as a courtesy. The new version has improved game play concept and questions.

SUMMARY OF LESSON ACTIVITY

Play a life-size board game involving fact, activity, and life application questions related to the Beatitudes to explore how to live as Jesus taught.

SCRIPTURE

Story: Matthew 5:1-12

Key/Memory Verse: Matthew 5: 3-12

PURPOSE

The children will explore how to live as Jesus taught while playing a Beatitudes Board Game.

Objective(s) for rotation

See Bible Background

Objectives for Games Workshop

By the end of this workshop, children will have:

- explored ways that they can "live the Beatitudes."
- measured themselves on how well they are achieving key attitudes required in the Beatitudes.

PREPARATION

Review Bible Background.

Materials List

- Bibles
- Buttons or some sort of marker tokens if you are not using a life-sized game board
- Card stock, three colors
- Chalk board, flip chart, or white board with appropriate writing utensils
- Die
- Game board
- Game cards
- Key Attitudes Meter
- Markers, blue and red
- Poster board

Advance Preparation Requirements

Die

- Buy oversized dice at various "game" websites including <http://www.trainerswarehouse.com>, make one out of a cube shaped box, or use a regular sized game die, available at most discount stores.

Game Board

- If you don't have a life-sized game board, you can create one on canvas painter's tarps using the instructions from Jaymie Derden (State St. UMC) at the rotation.org website: [link](#). (Or you can create tabletop sized game boards on posterboard using the same game path format.)

Game Cards

- Copy the text for the cards into your word processor and print them out on card stock. Use three different colors if you follow the State Street UMC directions with three different activity spots. Otherwise, combine and adapt the cards to fit your game board. For each set of cards, be sure to print the question on one side and the symbol on the other. For younger players, consider leaving out question cards marked with an asterisk. Make sure you shuffle the game cards, as they are listed here in a rather repetitive order.

Question Cards for the Game

Fact Questions

Teams land on spots marked with a cross; encourage the teams to use their Bibles to answer these questions.

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of (HEAVEN, EARTH). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be (WEEPING, COMFORTED). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit (NOTHING, THE EARTH). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be (SERVED FIRST AT DINNER, FILLED). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive (MERCY, MONEY). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see (GOLD, GOD). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of (GOD, JESUS). Move ahead one space.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of (EARTH, HEAVEN). Move ahead one space.
- Where was Jesus when he taught the Beatitudes? Move ahead one space.
- Where in the Bible can you find the Beatitudes? Move ahead one space.
- What are the names of the four Gospels? Move ahead one space.
- The Beatitudes are in the (NEW, OLD) Testament. Move ahead one space.
- Which other Gospel besides Matthew contains the Beatitudes (as part of the Sermon on the Plain)? Move ahead one space.
- True or False: Jesus was standing in a boat when he taught the Beatitudes. Move ahead one space.
- True or False: A person who is righteous goes around telling everyone, "I'm right, you're wrong!" Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are those who mourn, for they _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are the meek, for they _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are the merciful, for they _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they _____. Move ahead one space.

- Finish this statement: Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs _____. Move ahead one space.
- Finish this statement: Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for _____. Move ahead one space.

Activity Questions

Teams land on spots marked with a star.

- All the team members say the memory verse together. Move ahead four spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about being poor in spirit, read Isaiah 57:15. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of being poor in spirit, read James 4:7-10. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of mourning, read Psalm 51:1, 17. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of meekness, read Matthew 11:28-30. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of righteousness, read Philippians 3:7-11. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of mercy, read Ephesians 5:1-2. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of being pure in heart, read 1 John 3:1-6. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of being a peacemaker, read Romans 12:14-21. Move ahead two spaces.
- For a suggestion which will help you learn the attitude of being persecuted for righteousness, read 2 Timothy 3:12-15. Move ahead two spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about mourning, read Isaiah 61:1-2. Move ahead two spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about meekness, read Psalm 37:5-9. Move ahead two spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about righteousness, read Isaiah 11:4-5. Move ahead two spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about being merciful, read Psalm 41:1. Move ahead two spaces.

- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about being pure in heart, read Psalm 24:3- 4. Move ahead two spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about being a peacemaker, read Isaiah 60:17-18. Move ahead two spaces.
- For another look at how people at Jesus' time thought about being persecuted, read Psalm 119:86-87. Move ahead two spaces.
- Go to the whiteboard/chalkboard and draw a quick picture of Jesus sitting on a mountain, teaching. Move ahead two spaces.
- Jesus' teaching often surprised people because it was the opposite of what they expected. Act like someone who is the opposite of mourning. Move back one space.
- Jesus' teaching often surprised people because it was the opposite of what they expected. Act like someone who is the opposite of meek. Move back one space.
- Jesus' teaching often surprised people because it was the opposite of what they expected. Act like someone who is the opposite of poor in spirit. Move back one space.
- Some people hunger and thirst for righteousness, others think they just need food and water. Pretend you are eating a spaghetti dinner. Move back one space.
- All the team members say the memory verse together. Move ahead four spaces.
- You are being reviled and persecuted for Jesus' sake. Skip one turn.
- Blessed are the merciful: tell your team members you forgive them for squeezing against you on the tiny game board spot and maybe even stepping on your toes occasionally. Move ahead two spaces.

Life Application Questions

Teams land on spots marked with dynamite; while there are no right or wrong answers, require thoughtful, serious answers from the team.

- Danielle hurt her ankle. Devon got his Sunday School class to pray for her and now she is fine. She was healed much sooner than her doctor expected. Devon is poor in spirit. What might he say about all of this? Move ahead two spaces.
- Susan hurt her ankle. Bill got his Sunday School class to pray for her and now she is fine. She was healed much sooner than her doctor expected. Bill is NOT poor in spirit. What might he say about all of this? Move back two spaces.
- You are mournful because people who hate Americans destroyed the World Trade Center. But you are comforted because you know that God is in control. Move ahead two spaces.
- Moses was meek and humble (Numbers 12:3). He knew he was not a great speaker and that he would have no influence with the Pharaoh. Yet God chose him to lead His people out of Egypt. Moses did great things and still was meek. Move ahead two spaces.

- You see Derrick steal Curtis' lunch. What might a righteous person do? Move ahead two spaces.
- You see a homeless person by the side of the road with a "will work for food" sign. How would you be merciful? Move ahead two spaces.
- Your best friend promised to go skating with you. She had to cancel at the last minute-- she said relatives were visiting from out of town. You later discovered she went to another friend's sleepover -- and you weren't invited. How would you be merciful? Move ahead two spaces.
- Other kids make fun of you because you pray silently before you eat your school lunch. You are tempted to stop praying. How can you remain pure in heart? Move ahead two spaces.
- You see Sasha kick Jacob's sand castle. How would you be a peacemaker? Move ahead two spaces.
- Jacob throws sand at Sasha. How would you be a peacemaker? Move ahead two spaces.
- There is a new kid in your class. He is from somewhere else and he talks funny. And, well, he smells funny, too. At lunch there are two seats you could sit in: one next to the new kid and one at a table by yourself. Where do you sit and why? Move ahead two spaces.
- People tease you for sitting next to the new kid in your class that no one likes. What might you say? Move ahead two spaces.
- Your soccer team is in the playoffs. The last practice is on Sunday morning before the Sunday afternoon game. You miss the practice because you go to worship and Sunday School with your family. You are not allowed to start in the game because you missed practice. Move ahead two spaces.

Key Attitudes Meter

Adapted from the chart "Key Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount" in the *Life Application Study Bible*.

- Decide whether you want to have one copy for all to meditate on or individual copies for journals or take-home reflection. For one copy, write the information on a piece of poster board. For individual copies, reproduce the chart on 8 1/2" x 11" paper. The following terms should be shown on a scale. 1 to 10 may be too confusing for younger children, so use an unnumbered scale.

KEY ATTITUDES METER

Where do you fit in?

>WHAT JESUS WANTS US TO BE -- WHAT THE WORLD EXPECTS<

>Poor in spirit, humble -- Proud<

>Mourning, aware of sinful nature -- Happy at any cost<

>Meek, humble, gentle -- Powerful, proud<

>Hungry for righteousness, wanting to be sure the right thing is done -- Pursuing personal needs<

>Merciful, showing compassion and forgiveness -- Being strong without feeling<

>Pure in heart, devotion to God is not distracted -- Focused on things other than God<

>Peacemaker, trying to bring together people who are disagreeing -- Worried about peace for self rather than the chaos and confusion all around<

>Persecuted, abused for being a Christian -- Weak commitment to God<

Memory Verse

- Learn the Memory Verse.
- On a piece of poster board, print the "Blessed are..." half of each verse in red and the "for..." half of each verse in blue.

PRESENTATION

Open - Introduction

Open with prayer.

Have everyone open a Bible and read the scripture, Matthew 5:1-12, together.

Talk about what "blessed" means. Point out that while Jesus spoke Aramaic, Matthew wrote in Greek and his writing has been translated into English. There is not an exact English word to match Matthew's Greek word "makarioi." After hearing the children's suggestions, let them know that translators and scholars do not agree either, but possible translations in addition to "blessed" include happy, happy because you are right with God, fortunate, favored by God, filled with hope, and joy.

Discuss the students understanding of each of the attitudes for which Jesus urges us to strive. For example, "What do you think 'poor in spirit' means?" Listen to the children's suggestions and then let them know that while the commentators do not entirely agree, some suggest that in Jesus' time the listeners would have understood that Jesus was talking about people who were not proud of their spirituality.

Memory verse work

This is a long passage to memorize; adapt this activity depending on which week of the Rotation this is and how familiar the children are with all the verses.

1. The teacher reads through the verse, phrase by phrase and the students echo each phrase.
2. Divide the class in half. One half will say the first part of each verse, "Blessed are...", and the other half responds with the rest of the verse, "for...". Allow them to look at the poster at first, but after a few practice tries, see how much they remember without looking.
3. Then the halves switch and the group that did the "Blessed are..." now says the "for..." and vice versa.
4. As the students get proficient at the end of the Rotation, the teacher says the first half of one of the verses (not in order) to see who responds first with the correct second half of that verse (without looking at the poster).

Dig - Main Content

Play the game. Explain that teams of students will work together to move across the game board. In the process, they will take turns throwing a die, moving that number of spaces, landing on various squares, and answering questions that will help them learn more about the Beatitudes. The object of the game is not to be the first to reach the end, but for all teams to reach the end, or to get as far as time permits, and to have fun doing it.

Divide the class into teams of 3-4 players each. Have the team with the youngest or shortest player go first. Remind the children that the meek -- those who are not judged by the world's standards to be strong and powerful -- will inherit the earth.

If you are playing with a life-sized game board, all of the students on a team should move together and try to squeeze onto a space together. If another team lands on the same spot, squeeze them on as best you can.

If a roll of the die puts a team on a plain space, their turn is over and they wait there until their next turn. If they land on a space with a cross, star, or dynamite (or whatever your board has), they follow the directions on the card that corresponds to that space. They should work as a team to decide on an answer, and they may use their Bibles. All answers given/performed should be agreed upon by the entire group. Do not allow one person to shout out an answer. If a team cannot come up with an answer, others may make suggestions, but the team still has to agree on their final answer. Answers should be shared so all the teams can hear. Some of the questions may be repeated, as the cards are placed at the bottom of the deck after being used. Teams should try to come up with different answers for the questions that require "creative" responses.

Stop the game at least five minutes before the end of the class time.

Reflect - Closure

Show the students the "Key Attitudes Meter." Encourage the children to reflect quietly on how close they are to having the attitudes for which Jesus encouraged his listeners to strive. If you have given them individual copies, encourage them to make notes on things they can do to help them get closer to the attitude Jesus recommended. They may include the chart in their journals (if applicable) or take them home and pray for the Spirit to help them grow stronger in one or more of the attitudes.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for your patient teaching. Help us to hear in your word how you want each of us to live. Help us to see the way to live more spirit-filled, meek, and merciful lives. Help us to hate what is wrong and guide us so that we may do our best to bring peace and righteousness into our everyday world. Amen.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Adaptations - Younger Children

Leave out question cards marked with an asterisk.

Consider using the *New International Reader's Version* of the Bible for the verses looked up in the game.

The youngest children will need an older student or adult to read them the game cards and to help them find the Bible passages. Or, a helper can look up the Bible passages and read them to the class.

Adaptations - Older Children

Spend more time discussing how they can move to the left on the "Key Attitudes Meter." What can they change in their lives or do differently next time?

SOURCES

Game board idea inspired by Jaymie Derden, State Street UMC: [link](#).

The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright (c) 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

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