

KIND THOUGHTS

LESSON ONE

Concept

Kind thoughts are pleasant ideas that lift the soul. They always come *before* kind words and actions. How we think determines how we act.

If we want to become kinder people, the first step is to recognize that kindness, and unkindness, begin in our own minds. We can choose to think good thoughts, no matter what is happening around us.

If we're aware of our thoughts we can better control our words and actions. We need to be aware of what we're thinking, and try to catch ourselves in the act of thinking unkind thoughts. When we notice that our thoughts are unkind, we can say to ourselves, "That wasn't kind." Each time we catch ourselves thinking a negative thought, we should try to replace it with a positive one. That way we can prevent unkindness. Once we start paying attention to our thoughts, we'll discover that we can better control what we say and how we act. Then we'll be on the road to becoming the kind people we want to be.

If unkind thoughts about another person do occasionally creep into our minds, we can react kindly by trying to imagine what it would be like to be him, with his life, his needs and desires. We should then think about that person in the same kind way we'd want him to think about us.

We may believe that if others were kinder to us we could be more kind. Or we might think that our problems in life keep us from being happy and as kind as we should be. Alfred D'Souza once observed, "For a long time it seemed to me that life was about to begin--real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to go through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles *were* my life." Having kind, positive thoughts toward others, and our circumstances, is a wonderful step toward living a happy, abundant life.

Family Survey Review

Statement # 1. **Our family thinks kind thoughts about each other.**

- Let's name some kind things we can think about each other.

- What is an example of how we can replace an unkind thought with a kind one?

Story

Jayne Fisher watched anxiously as her 17-year-old daughter Katie pulled her unruly lamb into the arena of the Madison County Junior Livestock sale. With luck, Katie wouldn't collapse, as she had during a livestock show the day before.

Katie was battling cancer. This was her first chance in months to be outdoors having fun, away from hospitals and chemotherapy treatments, and she had come with high hopes of earning some spending money. She had wavered a little on her decision to part with the lamb, but with lamb averaging two dollars a pound, Katie was looking forward to receiving some much-needed money.

So she centered the lamb for viewing, and the bidding began.

That's when Roger Wilson, the auctioneer, had a sudden inspiration that brought some unexpected results. "We sort of let folks know that Katie had a situation that wasn't too pleasant," is how he tells it. He hoped that his introduction would push the bidding up, at least a little bit.

Well, the lamb sold for \$11.50 a pound, but things didn't stop there. The buyer paid up, then decided to give the lamb back so that it could be sold again.

That started a chain reaction, with families buying the animal and giving it back, over and over again. When local businesses started buying and returning, the earnings really began to pile up. The first sale is the only one Katie's mom remembers. After that, she was crying too hard as the crowd kept shouting, "Re-sell! Re-sell!"

Katie's lamb was sold 36 times that day, and the last buyer gave it back for good. Katie ended up with more than \$16,000. for a fund to pay her medical expenses - and she still got to keep her famous lamb.

Discussion

1. Why did the crowd at the livestock sale think kind thoughts about Katie?
2. How did the thoughts of the crowd determine their actions? (*Their kind thoughts about Katie led to higher bids, to help her*)
3. What can we do when unkind thoughts enter our mind?

Activity

We're each going to take a turn and share one kind thought about every family member. (*Example: One person might say, "Mom is a good cook." The second person might say, "Dad listens to my problems."*) One by one, every person in our family will have a turn listening to one kind thought about themselves from each family member.

Assignment

1. During the coming week, make a real effort to have kind thoughts. If you should catch

yourself with an unkind thought, recognize it and replace it with a pleasant thought.

2. Choose one person in the family, and try to be very sensitive to his or her feelings for one week. Make a special effort to really feel what that person is feeling, and think about him in the same way you'd like him to think about you.
3. Participate as a family in the activity which follows this lesson: Family Time Capsule.

ACTIVITY

FAMILY TIME CAPSULE

Most people have strong feelings about what it means to be a member of their family. This activity is an opportunity for family members to share those feelings of why their family is important to them.

Activity

1. Give each family member an envelope to hold any of the following:
 - Favorite keepsakes acquired during the past year (awards, letters, etc.)
 - Newspaper clippings, school report cards, original poems, etc.
 - Anything else that represents the person's hobbies or interests.
 - Photos of themselves, friends, activities.
2. Give everyone an index card or paper to write down his or her name, the date, plus any or all the following:
 - Names of friends.
 - Something they enjoyed this year.
 - Something they want to remember about the year.
 - Something they're proud of.
 - A goal they have for the next year.
 - Advice they'd like to give themselves for the next year.

Put the card in the envelope.
3. After everyone has filled their envelopes, on another piece of paper write a short note to each family member for that person to put in his or her envelope. Notes could include compliments, a special memory, or a wish you have for that person.
4. When all of the envelopes have been filled, seal them, put them in the box along with anything else your family would like, and seal it.
5. Write the date— in exactly one year— when you will open the box. In one year open the family box and enjoy your memories.