

Don't Be A Turd

A COMMUNITY FOCUS
ON CHARACTER

By Jessica Bouzianis

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This was created as a tool for families and small groups to be prompted into conversations and character building.

The Way of Love

1 Corinthians 13 (ESV)

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

³If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant

⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

⁶it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

⁷Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

¹⁰but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

¹³So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Week 1: Love is Patient and Kind

Opening and Short Discussion:

- Why do you think it's important to talk about building our character?
- What is a virtue?
- What does it feel like to wait?
- Is it easier to be kind when things go your way?
- Is there a difference between "nice" and "kind"?
- Who has been patient with you recently?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant"

Proverbs 15:18 "A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention."

Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Key Idea: Patience means waiting without complaining even if it's hard, and kindness is showing love even when it isn't deserved.

Short Discussion:

- Do you ever feel like you just have to respond with anger? You're mad or hurt and yelling or stomping feels like the answer. How do you choose kindness when you're angry?
- Have you ever put on a good act of being totally patient, but internally you were full of anger? Do you think the internal response matters?
- Have you ever done something that you know is really frustrating, but you were met with love, patience, kindness, and understanding? How did you feel?

Activity: Chain Connection

Offering kindness and patience with a genuine heart even when they aren't deserved can have a huge impact on your community. In a way, each act of love connects us to each other.

Paper Chain Connection

Each person writes an act of kindness they have done this week, then connect them together into a long chain. Can you add any for acts of kindness you have witnessed? A thought to remember: we can fill the world with beauty through love with our actions! What a simple way to shine the light of Jesus!

Activity: Act It Out

Act out the following prompts the wrong way, then redo it with a good heart. Discuss the reactions throughout, how it makes you feel, and how you can relate.

- 2 people: Wait Your Turn. Two people are both wanting a turn with a game. Person 1 just started their turn, person 2 has to wait their turn.
- 2 people: Helping someone struggling. One person is having a really hard day. They struggled with homeschool, struggled with chores, and just kicked their toe into a cabinet. Person two walks into the room and sees them.
- 2 people: Annoying mistakes. Person 1 was making dinner but dropped an egg on the floor. Person 2 walked in at that very minute and slipped on the egg.
- 3 people: Waiting at the post office. A person is taking forever checking out at the post office, and the clerk is patiently walking them through every option. Person 3 is in line waiting, in a hurry, and gets to choose their heart response.

Activity: Under Pressure!

Have you ever noticed that it can be harder to be kind and patient when you are under pressure? For this activity we're going to put it to the test. You have 60 seconds to line up in alphabetical order without saying making a sound, without pointing, and without mouthing words. If we aren't in the right place in a minute then we'll try this again, lining up from shortest to tallest.

Debrief: Was this frustrating? How did you communicate kindly without words? Did anyone get ignored? Was it hard to stay calm and patient?

Optional Homework:

We've talked today about being patient and kind with others, but for this assignment you get to show that to yourself. Pay attention to your thoughts toward yourself this week. At the end of the week, write or draw anything you feel toward yourself that is the opposite of kindness and patience in love. Discuss this with your parents and ask God for what the truth is. Cross out any bad thought patterns and write the truth over them.

Closing:

We're going to spend some time together discussing virtues for building strong foundations of character because we think you are amazing and we don't want that to be shaken! We have seen you grow so much and know each of you are fantastic, but we also all have areas we can improve in. This week, take some time to consider how you can mature in love and ask Jesus to help your heart to grow. We pray a blessing from God who is love over each of our homes, may His love help us each to mature together.

Week 2: Love Is Not Arrogant

Opening and Short Discussion:

- What does bragging sound like?
- Is it hard to let others shine?
- Why is humility important?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant”

Philippians 2:3 “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Proverbs 27:2 “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.”

Key Idea: Humility means recognizing our dependency on God, that all good things come from Him and not from ourselves.

Short Discussion:

- Is it wrong to be proud of yourself?
- Can you be proud and humble at the same time?

Activity: Act It Out

- 2 people: Person 1 just won a game of chess against person 2 and gets to respond with rude, prideful bragging, and in round two with humility and care.
- 4 people: You are sitting down for family dinner and having a conversation. Person 4 walks in and starts talking over the conversation to share their own story, and in round two they walk in and show how to humbly enter the conversation.
- 2-3 people: Person 1 is helping with some chores around the house without being asked. Persons 2-3 walk in...person 1 brags loudly to get extra attention with a sour heart, and in round 2 they have a happy heart about helping without bragging.
- 2 people: Person 1 is doing a math problem wrong. Person 2 looks over their work and attempts to patiently help them correct it. First round-person 1 has a prideful heart and cannot kindly take the correction, round two- happy hearts!

Activity: Compliment Circle

While it's important to not have a prideful heart or seek attention for good work, it's also a very good habit to see the good in ourselves and others. Giving encouragement and compliments out of a genuine place can really impact those around you.

For this activity we will sit in our circle and each person gets a piece of paper and a pen. Write your name at the top of your paper. Everyone hold your paper up in your right hand and pass it one person to the right. Take a minute to write a genuine compliment on the paper with the name you are holding. Once completed, pass it to the right one more time for an additional compliment. Once completed hold the paper in your left hand, pass it to the left twice to return it to its owner.

Debrief: You are each amazing, unique individuals created by a God who loves you passionately. You may look a lot like a relative, and even sound like them, but you are the very first you there has ever been. Stay humble, but also be proud of who you are because the Creator of all things made you and loves you!

Activity: Let Someone Else Shine

A person will be chosen at random to share about something they are good at. Everyone else gets to practice giving praise without adding your own story. This exercise is to practice praising others without turning the tables back to ourselves. Simply celebrate and allow them to shine.

Optional Homework:

Let someone else go first this week in a place that you always try to be number one. Make a note about what you did, how it felt, and how your heart responded. Were you able to do this without pride, or did you puff up at being a better person? Talk the experience over with your parents and ask Jesus for His perspective on your heart. He knows us all so well!!

Closing:

We've talked a bit about the importance of humility, but as we break today, I'm sending you off with a question to ponder. What does love in patience, kindness, and humility look like for you in your home? We are taking this time together to talk about character building, but we each get to choose whether we will walk it out. Father, come help each of us to look to You for help to love ourselves and the people around us with patience, kindness, and humility. Help us to see what You see and love what You love and fill our homes with Your presence.

Week 3: Love Is Not Rude

Opening and Short Discussion:

- What words feel rude?
- What actions feel rude?
- How does tone change meaning?
- How do you feel when you are ignored?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful”

Romans 12:10 “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Proverbs 12:18 “There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

Key Idea: Love honors one another with words, tone, and action.

Short Discussion:

- Have you ever been rude, felt bad about it, and not apologized?
- Do you feel tempted to be rude or have a bad tone because you feel like you are better than someone else? What are some other reasons we choose a bad tone?
- What is a good way to respond when someone is being rude toward you?
- How can you show respect and love when you see someone else being rude?

Activity:

- 2 people: Interrupting vs. listening. Person 1 is telling Person 2 about their day. Person 2 gets to show rude, interrupting behavior. Round two-show us how love listens.
- 2-3 people: Sarcasm vs. gentle speech. Person 1 is talking about their video game conquest that they are very excited about. Persons 2-3 respond sarcastically! Round two, show us a good heart.
- 2 people: Watch your eyes! Person 1 just came in from a walk and saw a huge worm on the sidewalk and is talking all about it. Person 2 rolls their eyes the second the story begins and shows us rude responses. Round two, show us how to listen in a loving way.
- 2 people: Honoring others. Person 1 is a mom and asks what person 2 would like to have for dinner. Person 2 is disrespectful and rude toward their mother. Round 2 shows us how to honor, love, and respect your mother.

Activity: Tone Test

Read the following phrases (and add any of your own) out loud to the group. Use a rude tone first, then a more respectful tone.

- Mom, what's for dinner?
- What do you want to do?
- Why are you so upset?
- I'm sorry.
- What did you do?
- I forgive you.
- Are you supposed to be doing that?

Activity: Love is NOT rude, even when we compete

We are a bit of a competitive bunch. Our attitude during competition matters as much as winning. Poor sportsmanship and rude behavior can show in our tone, our expressions, our gloating, and our roughness before, during, and after any activity.

Arm Wrestling Rules:

- -Elbows stay on the ground
- -Stop immediately when told
- -No trash talking or taunting
- -Don't slam arms down

Call out two people to arm wrestle in front of the bunch.

After the match do a quick debrief: did it feel rude or respectful? Can competition still be loving? Can you have a good attitude if you lose?

Do another round. Can also try thumb wrestling and rock/paper/scissors.

Optional Homework:

We have such an amazing privilege to be living this life as homeschool families, but sometimes in our safe, familiar space we can forget to love each other well. This week, when you feel the frustration rising and you want to give a quick, rude response, instead take a long slow breath in while asking in your thoughts for Jesus to come help you love well. Exhale slowly and respectfully and choose a loving response instead. Draw or write about the experience and talk it over with your parents.

Closing:

Father, we thank You for this group we get to do life with. Thank you for this time to focus together on building a stronger foundation of our character. We ask for Your help as we walk this out. In it all, Lord, help us to love You, to love ourselves, and to love others.

Week 4: Love Is Selfless

Opening and Short Discussion:

- Is it hard to compromise? Is it harder to compromise with a friend or a sibling?
- What happens when everyone insists on their way?
- Why does teamwork matter?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful”

Romans 12:16 “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.”

Galatians 5:13 “For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Key Idea: Love chooses what is best for everyone, not just for me.

Short Discussion:

- Love doesn't insist on it's own way, but does that mean we can never get what we want?
- What does it mean in Romans to live in harmony with one another?
- What do you think it means to use your freedom to serve one another?

Activity: Act It Out

-3 people: Person 1 has had a really hard day. Person 2 is sitting on the couch next to Dad(Person 3) to watch a family movie together when Person 1 walks in to join. Round 1-person 2 snuggles closer to Dad and shows off their place that they aren't giving up. Round 2-Person 1 gives up their seat and encourages Person 2.

-2 people: Two people sit down to do their own crafts but realize the supplies are low. There's not enough for both projects to get finished. Round 1-be whiny about the low supplies, maybe try to hide some in your pockets, be rude to get your own way. Round 2-be selfless with loving hearts.

-3 people: It's a free day and you three siblings get to pick what to do for the afternoon. Person 1 & 2 both want to go to a park, but Person 3 only wants to go to the movies. Round 1-unbending in your position. You don't have time to do both, and your idea is best! Round 2-show what love looks like in this situation.

-2 people: Your sibling has been sick and has the weekly chore of dishwasher duty, and Person 1 is in the kitchen making breakfast for the fam. There are no clean dishes. Person 2 walks in and sits down at the table waiting for Person 1 to figure out how to serve you breakfast. Round 1-Person 2 is not helping, rude, and selfish. Round 2-good hearts!

Activity: One Rule At A Time

When we insist on having things done our way, we can complicate what could have been an easy adventure.

Activity: The ultimate goal is that we go outside (or to the garage depending on weather), however we are going to see how selfishness in action causes complication. Start with the person to the right of the teacher and have them give a rule or task to do in place before leaving the room. (NO hitting. This must be a rule you have to do without touching the people around you.) Example: pat your head five times, hop on one foot twice, spin in a circle four times, etc. Can you go around the entire group and remember all of the rules to follow before you can actually go outside?

Debrief: Did this get confusing and frustrating, and maybe even impossible? This could have been such an easy task to do, to simply go outside, but we made it complicated for our whole community with all of our extras. This was obviously part of the exercise, but I'm confident we have all had this in our homes at times in real ways. Remember, love is selfless....there may be times things must be done with extra rules, but there are times we can lay down our extra expectations and enjoy things for what they are.

Activity: Tug of War Standstill

Divide into two teams of equal strength, both teams will pull as hard as they can to try to win. Stop the pulling after a good effort.

Round two: Have one side ease up.

Debrief: This hands-on experience shows us the big idea that when everyone is pulling their own way, it makes any progress difficult. Sometimes we have to yield, to give up our own idea of how something should go, to let go of our own wants to be in unity with the efforts of others. This doesn't mean you have to do this all the time of course, but sometimes.

Optional Homework:

Create a simple chart with 3 boxes:

- What I wanted
- What I chose instead
- How it helped someone else

Fill in at least one box this week and discuss with your parents. How is your heart in this area? Are there areas to improve?

Closing:

Compromise doesn't always feel good. In fact, sometimes it can feel completely unfair. Selflessness is a powerful work of the heart to do well. The encouragement here is to be mindful of the people around you and be willing to lay down your own desires while still having a good heart. There are so many layers to this point to walk through, so let's pray. Father, we ask that You fill us with wisdom to know what is right, strength to be willing to do it, and confidence to love ourselves and others no matter what it may cost. Come Lord, have Your way in us.

Week 5: Love Keeps No Record of Wrongs

Opening and Short Discussion:

- Is it hard to forgive?
- What happens when we hold grudges?
- How does forgiveness help us?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT) "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance."

Colossians 3:12-13 "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."

Matthew 18:21–22 "Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Key Idea: Love forgives.

Short Discussion:

- What do you think of the phrase, forgive and forget?
- How do we forgive someone and not hold a record of their wrongs, but also protect ourselves from getting hurt by them again? Is it wrong to protect ourselves?
- Does forgiving mean what happened was ok?

Activity: Act It Out

-2 people: You are having some boba together talking about how excited you are for summer, when Person 1 reminds Person 2 that last summer at the pool they dunked you and had to apologize in front of all your friends. Round 2: Enjoy the conversation together, don't bring up the past that has already been forgiven, and instead enjoy your boba.

-1 person: You're sitting in your room at the end of the day, thinking your thoughts out loud. Round 1-Your heart is choosing to make you a victim about everything from the day, whining, exaggerating, and assuming intentions of others. Round 2-You pray out loud to God the Father who sees all and loves you, being honest about your hurts but asking for His help with your own heart.

-3 people: Person 1 & 2 are outside playing catch with a football. Person 3 walks out the door and a wild throw hits you in the face unexpectedly. Round 1: Persons 1-2 run over apologizing like crazy asking if 3 is ok, but 3 is angry, yelling, and not at all going to forgive at that moment. 1-2 feel overcome with guilt and also don't forgive themselves. Round 2: Walk out forgiveness.

-2 people: Person 1 had a bad attitude with Person 2 when they were cleaning the bathroom. Round 1: Person 1 doesn't apologize, Person 2 gets an attitude back. Round 2: Person 1 doesn't apologize, but Person 2 sees that 1 is having a rough morning and forgives in their heart even though there wasn't an apology. Person 1 sees they were met with love, apologizes, and continues with a better attitude.

Activity: Holding the Weight

When we hold on to the wrongs that have been done, we end up carrying a heavy burden ourselves. Laying it down to Jesus brings so much relief.

Everyone stands up and holds a weight out with one straight arm. (water bottle, notebook, shoe, book, etc) Start a timer and see how long you can hold it, add extra weight and see if fatigue sets in.

Debrief: Holding a grudge is like holding this weight in our hands, but the moment we set it down we feel relief. Can you imagine holding your weight out all day while trying to do your daily routine? It would be impossible! Living a life of ease, peace, and joy is impossible when we hold onto unforgiveness.

Activity: The Backpack of Wrongs

Keeping a record of wrongs slows us down.

Pick one person to stand up and put on the backpack. They take a step and have to stop, add an object to the backpack and name a wrong (made up). Ex.-your sister woke you up, your mom didn't make a meal you wanted, your friend broke your toy, etc. Weigh the backpack down and have them walk across the room loaded. Carefully take off the backpack and look at the ease of them moving.

Debrief: Forgiveness helps us, not just others.

Optional Homework:

Do you need to forgive yourself or someone else? Write down the issue and bring it to your parents to discuss. Together, tear up the paper and talk to Jesus.

Closing:

Forgiving can feel like we're giving a free pass to someone that's done something wrong, and we like to see justice. There is so much to this subject to unpack, and I encourage all sorts of conversations with your family to talk this through, but the point I hope you walk away with today is that forgiving is handing your hurts over to Jesus, allowing Him to work things out, and trusting Him with your heart. We ask Jesus to come, help each of us to forgive quickly and love well.

Week 6: Love Never Ends

Opening and Short Discussion:

- Does it feel good to know that you are loved by your family and friends?
- Are we limited in how much love we have?
- If new people come into your life that you love, does that mean that you love your old friends less?

Pick 3 Kids to Read These Bible Verses:

- 1 Corinthians 13:13 "Love never ends."
- Lamentations 3:22-23 "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."
- Romans 8:38-39 "For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Key Idea: God's love never ends.

Short Discussion:

- Does love last when things are hard?
- How does God show lasting love?
- How can we live this out?

Activity: Act It Out

-2 people: Two people are playing chess when Person 1 makes an illegal move. Round 1-Person 2 smarts off, is rude, and love stops. Round 2- Person 2 corrects with kindness and love never ends.

-3 people: Person 1 is cleaning up a mess left by friends at a big family dinner. Person 2-3 see, but don't help or say anything. Round 1-Helper quits helping. Round 2-Helper keeps helping anyway and then joins the friends to play.

-Whole class- Person 1 is the teacher that day, introducing class and pointing out that it looks so different than it did last year. Round 1- the whole class whines, pouts, is rude, and the class ends abruptly. Round 2- we acknowledge the difference, but choose to be patient and open minded.

Debrief: How does love stay when everything else changes?

Activity: Relay

Students stand in a huge circle and pass an object (balloon, ball, etc) to the person on their left. Add more balloons.

Debrief: Love doesn't stop, it keeps moving. Love never ends, it continues from person to person! As a tie-in from the last week of culture of respect where we tried to juggle so many different balloons together, here we are passing them with ease!

Activity: Never-Ending

Two students stand holding hands in a line, another student joins, one at a time, until the whole group is connected. Can you move together while staying connected?

Debrief: What helped the line stay together? How does love keep going even as things change? Wasn't it interesting to see how love grew as more people were added, and how we were still able to stay connected! Love is like that, it grows, it continues, and it never ends.

Optional Homework:

Memorize all of 1 Corinthians 13 and share it with your parents.

Closing:

Character building is a lifelong work, but each effort we make helps shape and strengthen our foundation. We are so proud of the work we have been able to do together! Keep up this work and focus! We pray that you continue to give your hearts, your minds, your emotions, your actions, and your imaginations to Jesus who longs for you.