

Walking the Micah Road

'17



He has told you, O man, what is good; And
what does the LORD require of you But to do
justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly
with your God? Micah 6:8

Cadet/GEMS Theme: Devotional Resource Booklet

Contents:

a. Walk the Micah Road	2
b. Seek Justice	4
c. Love One Another	5
d. Turn On the Light	7
e. Speak Out for Justice	8
f. At the Bottom of the Sea	10
g. Be a Smart Carpenter	12
h. Tree House Rules	14
i. Position Your Nose	16
j. Skip the Drama; Take Action!	17
k. Poverty of the Heart	19
l. Move Those Feet	20
m. Walk the Talk	22
n. Justice: It's Not Just Us!	24
o. Towers That Teach	25
p. Less is More	25
q. Are You Willing	26
r. United In Love	27
s. Be Compassionate – Love Like Jesus	27
t. Walk the Narrow Road	28
u. Yes, He Can!	29

Walk the Micah Road

Micah 6:8

He has showed you, O man (O daughter), what is good.
What does the LORD require of you? To act justly and
to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Memorize

Micah 6:8

Life Lesson

The truth about how to live (and walk!) is in the Bible.

Object Lesson

You will need the theme banner and/or an enlarged theme logo, a bell or a whistle, a Bible, and a large space where girls can walk around and move. You will also need to write Micah 6:8 on a poster board, whiteboard, or chalkboard.

Begin with the girls sitting on the floor. Hold up the banner or the Walk the Micah Road logo and say . . . Girls, will you please tell me this year's theme? Listen to girls say, "Walk the Micah Road!"

Say . . . Very good! Before we think about what it means to walk the Micah Road, let's do some walking. Please stand up. I'm going to give you walking instructions. Please walk the way I've asked you to until you hear a bell/whistle. When you hear that signal, freeze in place and listen to the next walking instruction. Let's begin!

Walking Instructions:

1. Walk backward.
2. Walk very, very slowly.
3. Walk on your tiptoes.
4. Walk with large strides.
5. Walk with a limp.
6. Walk quickly!
7. Walk with "baby" steps.
8. Walk in a large circle.

Stand in the middle of the circle and ask the girls to sit down. Say . . . You did great, girls! You listened to my walking instructions and did a wonderful job doing what I requested. What are some other ways that I could have asked you to walk? Listen to responses. If desired, the person who volunteered the answer could demonstrate the walk for the group. (Examples: walk with your eyes closed, walk on your heels, walk pigeon-toed – with your toes or feet turned inward, etc.)

Message

Thank those who volunteered answers and say . . . We can think of all kinds of ways to walk, can't we? It's also true that throughout time people have tried all kinds of ways to please God. Maybe you've even wondered, "How can I please God? What can I do to make God happy?"

Our theme verse, the verse we're going to be thinking about all year long, tells us. *Point to the Micah 6:8 verse you wrote on the poster board, whiteboard, or chalkboard. Will you please read this verse aloud with me?*

He has showed you, O man (O daughter), what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

God clearly tells us three things that we should do to please Him! We are to: act justly – take action to help set things right; love mercy – show compassion to others at all times, and walk humbly with God – depend and trust in God to lead and guide you.

Hold up your Bible. To walk the Micah Road you're going to need God's walking instructions. Every day it's important to take time to sit down (just like you are doing right now!), open your Bible, and read it. If you're looking for a place to start when you get home, turn to the book of John. If you don't have a Bible at your home, I'd like you to talk to me when we're finished, OK? When we read our Bibles and talk to God in our prayers, God gives us our walking instructions. He tells us how to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

After we've received our Micah Road walking instructions, we need to get moving! We can't walk the Micah Road sitting down. It's a journey that demands action – loving actions to God and to the people around us.

Please join hands as we ask God in prayer to help us learn to walk the Micah Road this GEMS season.

Let's Pray

Father God, thank you for giving us clear instructions for how we should live. Teach each person here to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. We need Your help to walk the Micah Road. We look forward to the adventure and the GEMS season set before us! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Seek Justice

Isaiah 1:17

Seek justice; encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Memorize

Isaiah 1:17

Life Lesson

Seek out those who need justice and Jesus' love.

Object Lesson

You will need to hide twelve objects around the room. You will also need a clock or stopwatch for timing. Write a list of the hidden objects and photocopy it for each girl. Each girl will also need a pencil.

In preparation: Hide objects in such a way that they can be seen without moving things around or opening doors or drawers. Find ways to blend the objects into their surroundings. Examples: tape a button in the middle of a doorknob, place a pencil on top of a picture frame, wrap a dollar on the binding of a book, tie a ribbon around the leg of a chair, lay a bandage on top of a piano key, wrap a ponytail holder around the knob of a cupboard door, etc.

Give each girl a list of hidden objects and a pencil. Say . . . On your list are twelve objects that are hidden around the room. Your assignment for the next three minutes is to locate as many of these objects as you can find. You do not need to move things around or open doors to find these objects; you simply have to be observant. Once you've discovered an object, do not say it out loud. Instead, write its location on your sheet. Once you've located all the objects or hear my signal, please sit down in your chairs again.

When girls are finished, go over the list of objects together asking different girls to retrieve the hidden objects. Say . . . When you first entered this room, how many of you noticed at least one of the objects without knowing there was a list of twelve hidden objects? Ask for a show of hands. Raise your hand

if you noticed three hidden objects before you were told about this activity. *Discover the maximum number of hidden objects discovered before the object lesson/devotional began.*

Message

Our little game of hide and seek has much to teach us about seeking justice. Every day there are people and situations in our lives that demand justice. Someone is lonely, someone needs help with homework, or someone needs prayer. There may be people in our community who are hungry, hurting, and feeling like there is no hope for their future. If you read the front page of the newspaper or listen to a news broadcast on TV or the radio, you'll hear about people who are suffering.

Just like many of us walked by these hidden objects without even knowing they were there, it's possible for us to walk by people without even noticing their pain.

You found the objects when you were diligent in seeking them. In the same way, when we diligently seek justice we will see those who need us to take action on their behalf. To seek justice is exactly what God tells us to do in His Word, the Bible.

Listen carefully to Isaiah 1:17, *Seek justice; encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.* We must seek, inquire, and search for those who need Jesus. We must open our eyes and look for those who need an encouraging word, a hug, a loving act of service, a prayer, or a good friend.

Let's stand in a circle to pray. We're going to use our bodies and our voices. Please repeat what I pray and mimic what I do.

Point to your eyes: Father, help us to seek justice.

Point to your ears: Help us to hear the cries of the needy.

Hold out your hands: Help us to take action and help others.

Walk in place: Help us to act justly as we walk the Micah Road.

Fold your hands: In Jesus' name, Amen.

Love One Another

John 13:34

[Jesus said], "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Memorize

John 13:34

Life Lesson

Loving others involves taking time to get to know them.

Object Lesson

You will need two circles of chairs – an inner circle facing out and an outer circle facing in. Each chair should face its pair. You will also need a clock or stopwatch for timing.

Say... Please sit in one of the chairs. Each one of you should be facing a partner. You have 30 seconds to learn two things you never knew about your partner. I'll give the signal when your 30 seconds are finished. You may begin!

After 30 seconds, give the signal. Have the girls in the inner circle move clockwise and the girls in the outer circle move counterclockwise. They again have 30 seconds to learn two new things they never knew about their new partner. Continue play for 4-5 minutes.

When finished say... You did a great job getting to know one another better!

Message

Getting to know one another better is a necessary step in walking the Micah Road. If we are going to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, we need to get to know the people that God wants us to love and serve!

In John 13:34 Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Let's pray

Dear Jesus, You have given us the command to love one another. Teach us to do that through Your example in the Bible. Give us courage to initiate conversations with people we don't know well. May the people we talk to each day experience Your love through our words and actions. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Matthew 9:35-36 says, *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Jesus got to know people by walking through the towns and villages and meeting them face-to-face. He didn't love from a distance – He walked the streets teaching, healing, caring, and loving the people He met!

He was never too busy or too distracted to help those in need. He was always doing whatever was necessary to show them His love – washing feet (John 13:1-15), blessing children (Matthew 19:13), serving lepers (Luke 5:12-16), and even fixing breakfast (John 21:1-14). He also loved everyone – especially those that other people rejected and neglected (Matthew 9:9-13).

You and I can love like Jesus loves when we get to know the people around us. Instead of loving from a distance – we can walk the school hallways and smile at the people we meet, sit in the lunchroom and eat with someone we don't know well, or start a conversation with a player on the opposing team!

Like Jesus, we must not be too busy or too distracted to help those in need. We should be willing to do whatever is necessary to show them Jesus' love – washing dishes, hugging a crying toddler, taking out the garbage, and even joining others in a softball game that we may not feel like playing. We must love one another – especially those that other people have rejected and neglected.

Jesus' command to love one another doesn't need to be complicated. It can even be as easy as spending 30 seconds getting to know something new about someone you don't know well!

Please join hands with the partner sitting across from you while we pray.

Turn on the Light

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Memorize

Psalms 119:105

Life Lesson

Read the Bible. It is a light to guide the way you live.

Object Lesson

You will need a piece of paper and a pencil for each girl, a very, very dark room (or put blindfolds on the girls), a Bible, and a flashlight.

Distribute a piece of paper and a pencil to each girl, darken the room, and use the flashlight to read these instructions:

Tonight (today) we're going to begin with a simple art project. Please listen carefully to each drawing instruction.

1. Draw a house in the middle of the page.
2. Draw a tree on the left hand side of the house.
3. Draw a flower on the right hand side of the house.
4. Draw a door in the middle of the house.
5. Draw a bird sitting in the tree.
6. Draw two windows – one on the right side of the door and one on the left side of the door.
7. Draw a Bible in the bottom right corner of the page.
8. Write your name on the top left corner of the page.

Turn on the lights or have the girls take off their blindfolds. Ask... How did you do? Listen to responses. How would your pictures have looked differently if the lights were on while you were drawing? Listen to responses.

Message

When you turn on the light it changes everything! It's true for drawing in the dark and it's true for walking the Micah Road. Psalm 119:105 says, *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

Hold up your Bible and say... If we try to walk the Micah Road without the light of God's Word, the Bible, we're going to stumble, trip up, and fall. Our walk is going to look as disjointed and sloppy as our art projects! We need the light of God's Word to teach us how to walk.

Each day you meet up with choices or paths. When you greet your family in the morning you face a path: Will you greet your family with a smile or will you be grumpy?

When you go to school you face a path: Will you give your best to your studies or will you do the least amount required of you?

When you sit down for lunch you face a path: Will you be friendly to the girls around you or will you gossip?

When you go to a slumber party you face a path: Will you choose to play games and watch movies that please God or will you do things and watch things that you know will displease Him?

God's Word is a light to guide your choices! Although the Bible doesn't contain a listing of movies that you should or should not see, it does say that we should only fill our minds with what is right, pure, and lovely (Philippians 4:8). Although the Bible doesn't tell us what to talk about at lunch, it does say that our words should build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Girls, to walk the Micah Road we need to turn on the light of God's Word! *Ask a volunteer to come forward and demonstrate how to turn on your flashlight. Thank the volunteer. Ask another volunteer to demonstrate how to turn on the light of God's Word. (Volunteer should open the Bible and read it.) Thank the volunteer.*

The light of God's Word can't enter your hearts or guide your decisions if you keep it in your backpack or under your bed. Even using your Bible as a pillow won't work! We must turn on the light! You turn on the light when you open it up, read it, and ask God to let it guide your life.

Speak Out for Justice

Let's pray

Dear Father God, thank you for Your Word, the light to our path. Help each one of us to read and memorize Your Word more. Teach us its truth. May it keep us from evil paths and wrong turns so we can walk the Micah Road to Your praise and fame. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Proverbs 31:8-9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Memorize

Proverbs 31:8-9

Life Lesson

Use your voice to speak out for justice.

Object Lesson

You will need mailing labels or stickers with one country printed or handwritten on each label. Create enough labels for each girl and counselor (may have repeats if necessary). You will also need a world map or globe.

Bangladesh	India	Romania
Bolivia	Indonesia	Rwanda
Cambodia	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Chile	Lebanon	South Africa
Colombia	Mali	Sri Lanka
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Swaziland
Ecuador	Mozambique	Tanzania
Ethiopia	Nicaragua	Uganda
Guatemala	Niger	Vietnam
Haiti	Peru	Zambia
Honduras	Philippines	Zimbabwe

As girls walk into the room where you're meeting for praise and worship and group devotions, place a country sticker on her shirt. Before she sits down she needs to find the country on the world map/globe. (Optional: The girls could put their stickers on the globe or place small stick pins on the map where their country is located.)

When everyone has found her country on the map and sat down say ... Raise your hand if you located your country within 30 seconds or less. Raise your hand if it took at least a minute or two to locate your country. Raise your hand if you had to ask someone for help to locate your country.

Each of the countries on your stickers has men, women, boys, and girls who are suffering from poverty, hunger, and injustice. Picture a girl about your age from the country you were given. What are some of the basic needs she has that are just like the needs you have? *Listen to responses.*

You're right! There are girls in all of these countries who are your age. Like you, they need food, water, sleep, clothing, and shelter. They need an education. When they are sick they need doctors and medicine. Like you they need love, care, family and friends, and above all they need to know Jesus.

Message

Knowing the location of these countries is so much deeper than testing our geography skills. Proverbs 31:8-9 says, *Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

We are to speak out for justice and use our voice to help ease people's physical and emotional suffering. We are to care about the injustice in the world, and selflessly serve the needs of others who cannot speak for themselves.

One of the first steps to using our voice to help the poor and needy is to care enough to learn where their countries are located on the map! Then with the help of our families, teachers, and friends, we can research these countries. Start with this question: What is the greatest need of girls who live in Haiti, Guatemala, Zambia, Bolivia or the country that you located on the map?

You may not be able to travel to all these countries, but you can pray for the people who live there. Think about the basic needs that we all have – whether we live in North America or Zimbabwe – and pray. Pray that God would provide the food, water, friendship, medicine, hope, shelter, clothing, and love that they need.

As you learn about the needs of others and begin to daily pray for them, God may open doors for you to help support their needs. Our God is BIG and He can do BIG things through you when you use your voice to speak out for justice.

Let's gather around the map (or globe) together. Please point to your country and we'll pray together for the people that live in those places.

Let's pray

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that You are able to meet the needs of people around the world. Tonight (today) as the girls point to different needy countries around the world, we lift our voices up to You and ask that You will meet the needs of the poor, hungry, sick, and hurting people in these regions. Be their hope and their help. Please send Jesus followers to these places to take action to help set things right. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Family Connection Time

Gather your children together for a family discussion time. As children grow, it's critical that they receive love, reasonable boundaries, and guidance for their steps. This intentional connection time will serve as a foundation in building relationships between parents and children, brothers and sisters, and most importantly – with God!

Before you read the message portion of the object lesson together, round up an atlas, world map, or other resources to help you navigate country names and locations. These aids will help in your family discussion!

Questions for Discussion

1. Reread Proverbs 31:8-9. Describe people who cannot speak for themselves.
2. Talk about a needy country in this world. Locate the needy country on a globe, atlas, or world map. Through news resources, the local library, or the Internet, discover this country's greatest need. How can your family speak out for justice in this country?

At the Bottom of the Sea

Philippians 4:13

I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Memorize

Philippians 4:13

Life Lesson

We can live God's way when we depend on Him.

Object Lesson

You will need a baseball bat, a fingernail file, and a flashlight (without batteries).

Say... Could I please have a volunteer? *Ask the volunteer to join you in front of the group and say...* Would you mind helping me practice pitching? I'd like to join a softball league this summer and thought it would be fun to be the pitcher. *Hand the volunteer the bat.* You get ready to hit the ball and I'll step back here to pitch it. Oh, we have a problem. I forgot my softball. I guess we're going to have to do something else.

I know! Why don't we polish each other's fingernails! *Ask the volunteer to sit down, reach for her hand and say...* I've got my fingernail file, and my... oh, my. I forgot the fingernail polish. Looks like we're not going to be able to polish each other's nails either.

No worries. I have a plan. How about we take a walk outside later this evening. I've got my flashlight and I so enjoy walking in the dark. *Turn the flashlight on.* Hmm. This doesn't seem to be working. *Check the batteries in the flashlight.* Ugh. I forgot to put new batteries in this flashlight. We're not going to be able to walk tonight either.

I'm so sorry. It looks like I won't be able to do any of the things that I wanted to do with you because in every situation, something was missing. *Thank volunteer and ask her to sit down.*

Message

Without a softball, I can't practice pitching. Without fingernail polish, we couldn't do each other's nails. Without batteries in my flashlight, we can't take a walk on a dark night. There's something in each of these scenarios that is also true for you and me. Without God living and working in us, we can't walk the Micah Road in a way that pleases Him! With God we can!

Philippians 4:13 says, *I can do everything through him who gives me strength.* What does this verse really mean? If we can do *everything* through Jesus who gives us strength, does that mean that we'll be able to jump off a tall building and fly, or snap our fingers and our homework will be finished?

No! The truth of this verse is better than flying and finished homework. God is telling you and me that when we depend on Him He will give us the strength and power to do the things that He wants and wills for us to do. This verse is not for our pleasure or our selfish plans. The strength to do all things is for whatever God wishes for us to do.

We can know from the Bible that one of the things God wants us to do is to walk the Micah Road. Because God wants that for us, He will give us the strength and power to do it if we depend on Him.

In the Bible there was a man named Jonah who didn't want to depend on God. God told Jonah to preach to the people living in the city of Nineveh. Jonah followed his own selfish plans and ran away. He bought a ticket and boarded a ship sailing for another town.

Once the ship was on the sea, God sent a great wind. The storm was violent and the ship threatened to sink! The sailors discovered that Jonah was running away from God and said to him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" Jonah told them to pick him up and throw him overboard.

After trying again to save their ship and their lives, the sailors listened to Jonah and threw him into the sea. When Jonah hit the water, the sea grew calm and a great fish swallowed him. For three days and three nights he lived in the belly of a fish.

At the bottom of the sea Jonah learned to depend on God. You and I need to learn to depend on God, too. Instead of trusting in ourselves and going our own way, we must pray this prayer, "God, I need You! I will depend on You to give me the strength to do all things!"

That's a prayer for the days when you feel like you're at the bottom of the sea and it's a prayer for today. Choose to depend on God! If you don't, your boat will eventually sink and life will get fishy. Just ask Jonah.

Let's pray

Dear Heavenly Father, we need You! Please forgive us when we selfishly pursue our own pleasures. We are making the choice today to depend on You to give us the strength to do all things! Thank you for that promise! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Be a Smart Carpenter

Matthew 7:24-27

[Jesus said], "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Memorize

Matthew 7:24

Life Lesson

Build your life on God's Word. Read it and obey it!

Object Lesson

You will need one narrator, four actresses (the big bad wolf and three little pigs), two volunteers per house – one house of straw, one house of sticks, and one house of bricks. You will also need to photocopy the script for the narrator and four actresses.

The Three Little Pigs – The GEMS Version

Narrator: Tonight (today) we're going to think back on the fairy tale called *The Three Little Pigs*. One day Mother Pig sent her three little piglets out into the world. The first pig built a house of straw.

Pig #1 has two volunteers face each other, raise their arms, and join their hands to form the peek of the house. She then enters her "house."

Narrator: The second little pig built a house of sticks.

Pig #2 has two volunteers face each other, raise their arms, and join their hands to form the peek of the house. She then enters her "house."

Narrator: The third little pig built a house of brick.

Pig #3 has two volunteers face each other, raise their arms, and join their hands to form the peek of the house. She then enters her "house."

Narrator: Once the pigs had all moved into their homes, the big bad wolf came into town.

Big bad wolf: Knocks on the house of the straw and says . . . Little pig, little pig, let me come in.

Pig #1: Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin!

Big bad wolf: Well, then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in. The wolf huffs, puffs, and blows on the house. The "house" and the pig fall to the ground.

The big bad wolf then walks to the house of sticks, knocks on the door, and says . . . Little pig, little pig, let me come in.

Pig #2: Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin!

Big bad wolf: Well, then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in. The wolf huffs, puffs, and blows on the house. The "house" and the pig fall to the ground.

The big bad wolf then walks to the house of bricks, knocks on the door, and says . . . Little pig, little pig, let me come in.

Pig #3: Not by the hair of my chinny chin chin!

Big bad wolf: Well, then I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in. The wolf huffs, puffs, and blows on the house. Then huffs, puffs, and blows on the house until she falls over because she's out of breath.

Narrator: The wolf huffed and puffed and eventually fainted from lack of oxygen to her brain. The pigs carried the wolf off to another town and they all lived happily ever after in the brick house!

Thank all your volunteers with applause and ask them to return to their seats. Ask . . . Which pig was the smartest carpenter? Listen to responses. You're right. The third pig was the smartest carpenter because she chose the most solid building materials for her house.

Message

Jesus tells us in His Word to be smart carpenters and wise builders. Listen to His building instructions for your life. Matthew 7:24-27 says, [Jesus said], "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Smart carpenters build their lives on Jesus, the solid rock. They follow His example, trust Him, and obey what He says. Their building material is His Word. They read their Bibles, memorize it, and put it into practice.

With Jesus as their firm foundation and God's Word as their solid structure, they are able to withstand life's storms. When bullies, pain, loneliness, fear, and other trials try to huff, puff, and blow their life down, they stand firm. With their life built on Jesus and the truth of God's Word, they do not fall!

How can you and I be smart carpenters? One way is to take the things that you learn in your GEMS Bible study and work them into your life. When you get home, think about the things that we discussed together and put them into practice!

What are you building your life on? Micah Road walkers choose to build their lives on Jesus and the Word of God.

Let's pray

Dear Father, thank you for Your Word, the Bible. Thank you for the privilege of reading it here at GEMS and at home. Please work Your Word into our daily lives so we can stand firm in the storms of life. In His name, Amen.

Tree House Rules

Titus 3:1-2, NLT

Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers.

They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good.

They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.

Memorize

Titus 3:2

Life Lesson

God's children must live in love and unity.

Object Lesson

You will need the song We Are One in the Spirit. It is on Grace and Colleen's CD, *Not be Shaken*.

Instructions for the classic "pretzel" team-building game:

1. Divide the girls into groups of 8-10.
2. Instruct the girls to stand in a circle, reach their hands into the middle of the circle, cross arms and randomly grab hands across the circle.
3. Girls must work together to untangle without dropping hands.

When finished, invite the girls to return to their seats for the devotional.

Message

I once heard about a group of kids who posted a sign on their neighborhood tree house that read:

- Nobody act big.
- Nobody act small.
- Everybody act medium.

Those are good, biblical truths for our relationships with one another. Let's break it down and think about what each statement means.

Nobody act big. Pride destroys relationships. Proverbs 13:10a, *Pride only breeds quarrels.* Do not be prideful, conceited, and think that you're better than the people around you. God says that we must get rid of pride and *in humility consider others better than yourselves* (Philippians 2:3b).

Nobody act small. Don't walk around with your head hanging low saying, "I'm not smart enough, fast enough, pretty enough, or good enough." That's not true. You matter to me. You matter to God! God loves you and you're incredibly special to Him! *[God] takes great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing* (Zephaniah 3:17).

Everybody act medium. Titus 3:1-2, NLT, *Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.*

Those verses tell us how to live in love and unity with one another. Be obedient to your parents, teachers, and counselors. Be ready to do good and to give others a helping hand. Don't tear people up or start fights, instead come alongside them with a word of encouragement. Be gentle and show true humility to everyone. Put your arm around someone and say these words, "I believe in you," "I'm thankful for you," and "I'm glad you're a part of my life."

Nobody act big. Nobody act small. Everybody act medium. Those are tree house rules for God's family tree! We don't walk the Micah Road alone. We do it in community, in relationship with one another. God our Heavenly Father put our lives together so that we could be united in love with Him and with one another.

Sometimes our relationships aren't what they are supposed to be. Sometimes our relationships with our parents, brothers or sisters, classmates, or maybe even someone in GEMS looks like a tangled mess.

Think back to just a few moments ago when your arms were tangled like pretzels. With love, patience, work, and determination, you helped each other untangle and form a circle of unity. The same thing needs to happen in all of our relationships. Micah Road walkers need to love one another, forgive each other, and work toward a circle of unity.

Let's join hands together in a large circle. We're going to sing *We Are One in the Spirit** together. While we sing, let's march in sync, as a reminder that we must be united in God's love as we walk the Micah Road.

*The song *We Are One in the Spirit* is on Colleen & Grace's CD, *Not be Shaken*.

Position Your Nose

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Memorize

Romans 12:16

Life Lesson

Humble people are in God's position to help others.

Object Lesson

You will need one small beanbag (or sandwich bag filled with dried beans) for every six to eight girls. You will also need one piece of paper for every six to eight girls that reads, "Please help me; I need a friend!"

In preparation: This is a relay between teams of six to eight girls. Create a start line and determine the place where the girls are to turn around to head back to their team. At the place where they are to turn around place the piece of paper that reads, "Please help me; I need a friend!" flat on the floor.

Divide the girls into teams of six to eight. Ask them to line up at the start line. Say . . . To compete in this relay you need to look up at the ceiling, place the beanbag on your forehead, walk around the piece of paper that is on the floor, walk back to your team, and hand the beanbag to the next teammate in line. If you drop your beanbag, you need to start over. The first team to have all its players finish wins!

When finished, congratulate the winning team with applause and ask . . . How many of you were able to read what it said on the paper you walked around? If no one was able to read it, ask a volunteer from each team to place a beanbag on her forehead, walk to the sign and read the sign while keeping the beanbag rested on her forehead.

After volunteers demonstrate, hold one of the pieces of paper up and have the girls read it aloud. Praise each one. I need a friend!

Message

Girls, do you see the truth behind this object lesson? The paper read, "Please help me; I need a friend!" Yet we missed the message because our noses were in the air in order to keep our beanbags balanced.

The same is true in day-to-day life. If we keep our noses in the air because we're filled with pride, we won't see the people around us who are calling out for help and need a friend! It's only when we rid ourselves of pride and walk humbly with God that He is able to use us to reach out to others.

The Bible says, *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited* (Romans 12:16).

That's God's clear-cut message for you and me. Do not be proud. Do not be conceited. Instead, live in harmony or in unity with each other. Be willing to hang out or befriend people that may be labeled as nobodies or considered unimportant.

God created all people in His image. He looked at the people He made and said, "It is good." How it must grieve Him when we then look at each other and decide who is worthy and who is not worthy of being our friend.

God desires that you and I be humble people. In Isaiah 66:2 God said, *"This is the one I esteem; he (she) who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."* God values humility!

What is the position of your nose? Is it up in the air, filled with pride? Or is it pointed toward a humble walk with God? God will readily position humble people to help others as they walk the Micah Road.

Let's Pray

Dear Father, please forgive us when we have our noses in the air and are puffed up with pride. Mold us into girls and women who walk humbly with You. Help us to befriend all the people that You place in our path and use us to reach out to the needs of others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Skip the Drama; Take Action!

Psalms 106:3

Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right.

Memorize

Psalms 106:3

Life Lesson

Micah Road walkers must move from acting to action!

Object Lesson

You will need two volunteers, a table and two chairs, a spoon, a cereal bowl, a glass, a box of cereal, milk, and orange juice.

In preparation: In front of the group set up a table with two chairs (both chairs facing the group). In front of one of the chairs, set up all the breakfast supplies. There should not be any supplies in front of the other chair. Talk to your two volunteers ahead of time. Instruct them to mimic *everything* you say. They will both do the exact same things, except one person will be pretending to eat breakfast and the other person will really be eating breakfast. Have the two volunteers mirror one another as closely as possible – how they pour their orange juice, when they take a bite of cereal, etc. The closer the “pretend” volunteer and the “real” breakfast eater can imitate one another, the better.

Say... We’re going to begin by watching the morning breakfast routine of _____ and _____ (names of volunteers). Each morning these girls walk to the kitchen table, pull out their chairs, and sit down. They bow their heads, fold their hands, and thank God for a new morning and the food that He provides for them to eat.

After prayer, they reach for their favorite box of cereal, pour it into their bowl with three shakes, and place the box back on the table. They carefully close the box again so the cereal doesn’t dry out! Next they carefully pour the milk in the bowl with their left hand, but they pour the orange juice into their glass with their right hand.

Let's watch them enjoy their breakfast. They take a bite of cereal with their right hand and rub their stomach with their left hand –yum, yum! They're both a little tired this morning, though, and yawn loudly before taking another bite of cereal.

Next, they drink three gulps of orange juice and eat two more bites of cereal. They're really hungry! Now they're scratching their head with their left hand, what are they forgetting? Oh, that's right, they remember! Today they need to be ready to leave for school early! They quickly push the chairs back and run to their bedrooms to get ready!

Thank the volunteers with applause and ask... What was the difference between the way _____ and _____ (names of volunteers) ate their breakfast? *Listen to responses.* You're exactly right! _____ (name) acted or pretended like she was eating breakfast, and _____ (name) really did eat breakfast.

Message

Thinking about our volunteers, let's reflect on the way you and I walk the Micah Road. Micah 6:8 tells us to act justly! Maybe sometimes we do just that – we act; we are actresses, acting, or pretending to walk the Micah Road. Maybe at GEMS or with our friends we talk about how important it is to help orphans, or show special kindness to the elderly, or to be a loving, listening friend. We act like it's really important, but we don't follow through with action. To God, we look like _____ (name) pretending to eat our cereal.

When Micah 6:8 tells us to act justly, we are not receiving a command to be actresses. God is telling us to take action! We need to get up and get moving, doing the things that God says we must do – standing up for those who need justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with Him.

Psalm 106:3, *Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right.* What a promise! Blessings and much joy will be yours when you deal justly with others and do what is right!

Is that always easy? No.

Is it sometimes easier to pretend to walk the Micah Road than to lace up our shoes and get moving? Yes.

So how can you make the move from the comfort of your couch to the Micah Road starting blocks? Here are three musts for Micah Road walkers:

1. Read God's Word daily.
2. Follow hard after God's Son, Jesus.
3. Build relationships with God's people.

Skip the drama. With the power of God's Word, the example of His Son, and the encouragement of His people, make the move from acting to action today!

Let's pray

Father God, forgive us when we spend more time acting like we're walking the Micah Road than taking action. Thank you for Your Word, the example of Your Son, Jesus, and Your children who encourage us to walk Your way. Thank you for Your promise that I will experience Your joy and blessings when we live justly and do what is right. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Poverty of the Heart

Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Memorize

Colossians 3:12

Life Lesson

Spread God's love to the lonely and those who lack love.

Object Lesson

You will need a really large area for the girls to form a circle.

Invite the girls to stand in a large circle and say . . . God loves you. His love for you is wide (have girls spread their arms wide). His love for you is long (have girls spread their arms with one arm reaching to the ceiling and one to the floor). God's love for you is high (have girls jump and reach to the ceiling). His love for you is deep (have girls touch their palms flat on the floor).

To love mercy is to spread the love that God has for us to other people! Let's see how far God's love can spread. See how wide you can make the circle and still keep everyone connected. Begin by spreading your arms wide and touching fingertip to fingertip. Wow! That's a really wide circle!

Can you make the circle even wider? *Give girls the opportunity to discover ways to make it wider still. Maybe they could lie on the floor and have one person's hand touch another person's shoe. When girls have made the circle as large as possible, ask them to sit on the floor, bringing the circle closer while they hear from God through His Word.*

Message

Girls, what does it mean to live in poverty? Listen to responses. That's right and true. Most often when I think of someone being poverty-stricken I think about that person not having enough money to take care of her basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing.

There's another kind of poverty that sometimes goes unnoticed in schools, homes, churches, and even GEMS Clubs. It's a poverty of the heart. It's when someone lacks love and suffers from loneliness. Maybe you're that person who feels lonely inside or maybe it's the person to the right or the left of you.

God tells us in His Word how we should treat one another. *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3:12).*

If each one of us would show love, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience to one another, do you think that would wipe out loneliness at our GEMS Club? *Listen to responses.*

Just a moment or two ago you used your hands and bodies to get an idea of how unimaginably far God's love can spread. His love is wide enough to wipe out loneliness at GEMS Club, in our schools, in our churches, and in our communities.

It's going to take some stretching and some effort on our part to spread God's love! Close your eyes and silently answer these two questions:

1. Will you stretch out of your comfort zone to reach out to the lonely? *Wait 15 seconds.*
2. Will you widen your circle of friends to include those who feel alone? *Wait 15 seconds.*

You may open your eyes again. Dress yourself each morning with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love. If you will put these things into practice, you'll be part of a heart cure. You'll be helping to eliminate an emotional disease called poverty of the heart.

Please join hands while we pray.

Let's pray

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for Your wide, long, high, and deep love for each one of us. Please draw near and encourage those who feel lonely right now. Teach all of us to be more compassionate, kind, gentle, patient, and loving to one another. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Move Those Feet

John 13:5-10a, 12-15

After that, [Jesus] poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet." When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

Memorize

John 13:15

Life Lesson

Get moving! Imitate how Jesus lovingly served others.

Object Lesson

You will need rolls of masking tape and a large space for the girls to sit and move around.

Divide the girls into groups of six. Give each group a roll of masking tape. Read John 13:5-10a, 12-15 to the girls. When finished reading say... One of the ways that Jesus took action to serve His disciples was by washing their feet.

Tonight (today) I want your group to brainstorm a way that you can act justly – taking action that helps set things right. Maybe you can act justly by giving money to orphans in Africa, or baking cookies for a new mom.

or reading a book to a preschooler. Talk with your small group about one way that you can act justly. Using the masking tape, spell out the key word or words of your action on the bottom of your group's shoes.

For example, if my action were giving money to orphans in Africa, I would help my teammates spell out HELP ORPHANS on the bottom of their shoes. The first person's right foot would have the letter H and her left foot would have the letter E. The person sitting to her left would have the letters L and P. Each shoe gets one letter. When you're finished, have your group sit on the floor with the soles of their feet facing the other groups so all the girls can read your action.

When everyone is finished, have each group share their action with the other groups. If there's extra time throw out a word challenge for the girls. As a group, ask them to compose at least one or two more words using the letters that are already on their shoes. (The words do not need to be related to justice. It's just a word challenge!) When finished say...

Message

In the Bible verses we listened to earlier Jesus took action by washing His disciples' feet. Washing feet was a boring, demeaning job for servants. Peter saw what Jesus was doing and he protested. Jesus was his Teacher, Master, and Lord! He shouldn't be doing a servant's job! He shouldn't be washing feet!

Reflecting on this true story in the Bible, Stephen Arterburn writes, "[Jesus'] act of humility stunned [the disciples]. It's telling that none of them rose to relieve Jesus of the duty. They all concluded, 'Someone else should do that.' None of them thought, 'I will do that.'" None of the disciples offered to help Jesus.

When Jesus was finished washing their feet he looked at them and said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15). He told them to change their posture and take action. We need to also follow Jesus' example by humbly serving others.

On your shoes you spelled out some wonderful ways to serve others. To act justly we need to move those feet – taking action that helps set things right.

Invite the girls to stand in a circle for prayer. Instead of joining hands, ask that they join feet by having their shoes touch.

Let's pray

Dear Jesus, thank you for the example that You set for us in how we should serve others. Teach us to move our feet, taking action to help set things right for people who are suffering injustices and need Your hope and help. In Your name we pray, Amen.

Walk the Talk

James 2:14-17, NLT

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" – but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

Memorize

James 2:14

Life Lesson

Our love for God must be evident in our words *and* actions.

Object Lesson

No supplies needed.

Say... Follow my instructions!

1. Hold your left hand in the air.
2. Wiggle all your fingers except your thumb.
3. Make a circle by connecting your thumb to your index finger.
4. Wiggle your other three fingers.
5. Tell the girls to place the circle on their nose, but you place your circle on your chin.

Many of the girls will place the circle on their chin because they are mimicking your actions instead of following your verbal instructions. Say... Stand up if you put the circle on your chin instead of on your nose. Ask one of the girls who is standing up... Why did you put your circle on your chin instead of your nose? Listen to her response. Thank her for her response and have all the girls sit down again.

Message

It's been said that our actions speak louder than our words, and our short experiment proved that didn't it?

Our actions must prove the truth of our words, and our words must be backed up by our actions! God says it this way in His Book, the Bible: *What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" – but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless* (James 2:14-17, NLT).

If we recite Micah 6:8, He has showed you, O man (O daughter), what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God, but our actions are **not** just, loving, and humble, what good is it? It's like telling someone who is hungry to eat well, but neglecting to give him food. It's like telling someone who needs clothing to stay warm, but refusing to give her a coat. What good is it?

We must walk the talk! Our Micah Road walk needs to line-up with our Micah Road talk. Our conversations must mirror our conduct. To be world changers, to shine as bright lights for Jesus in this world, our words of love for our Heavenly Father must be proven by the loving actions that we do for one another.

Galatians 6:4 says, *Each one should test his (her) own actions.* Shut your eyes and give yourself this one question test:

1. Does my love for God show in my words *and* my actions?

The test only has one question, girls, but it's a question that needs to be asked over and over and over again. If your love is shining in your words and actions – that's good. Keep humbly walking the Micah Road. If your words and actions are not lining up, it's time for a U turn.

We're going to ask God in prayer together to help us serve Him with our words and our actions. I would also encourage you to find a friend to talk to about this. Hold each other accountable each time your walk doesn't match your talk.

Let's pray

Dear Father, thank you for Your patience with us as we learn to walk the Micah Road. Forgive us when the things we say don't match with the things we do. Help us to walk Your way in our speech and in our actions. We want Your love to shine brightly in us and through us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Justice: It's not just us!

Scripture: Amos 5:24

You will need: a large map, scissors, a piece of paper large enough to cover the map, a marker, and a pushpin.

Preparation: post the large map on the wall and cover it with a piece of paper. Cut out a hole above the province or state that you live in.

Say . . . Could I please have a volunteer come forward and put a pushpin on the map where our GEMS Club meets? *Volunteer puts pushpin on the map in the city where you meet. Thank volunteer and say . . .*

There's a short book in the Old Testament written by a man named Amos. Amos was a shepherd and a farmer when God gave him a message that He wanted Amos to tell to the people of Israel.

In Amos' book, we learn that Israel lived in peace and prosperity. They were a people that were well off. They were wealthy and powerful. They were a lot like the people in our country.

They were also a people that hoarded their wealth. They were greedy, unjust, and didn't care about the poor. Listen to what God told these people through Amos: *[You] trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed (Amos 2:7a). You trample on the poor (Amos 5:11a). You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts (Amos 5:12b).*

Israel lived by the motto, "It's all about me!" Do you think the same could be said about the people in our town, in our province/state, and in our country? Sometimes we think our money, our time, and our vast resources, are all about us. It's about making us comfortable. It's about making sure life is good for us.

Kevin Blue wrote, "The kingdom of God is not just about us. It is about justice and not just us." *Using your marker, in large lettering, write across the piece of paper: It's not about just us, it's about justice!*

God was angry with the people of Israel for ignoring the needs of the poor and being content to care for their own needs instead of the needs of others. Amos 5:24 says, *But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!*

Tear the large piece of paper off the map and say . . . justice is about taking action that helps set things right in our town, in our province/state, in our nation, and all around the world.

God demands that we live a life of justice that is not about just us!

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, please forgive us when we make life all about us. Open our eyes, ears, and hearts to the needs and cries of the desperate, poor, and lonely. Help us not to be complacent in our prosperous nation, but driven to serve others in Jesus' name. We pray these things in His name, Amen.

Towers that Teach

Scripture: Genesis 11:1-9

You will need: a box of paper clips for each team of five to ten girls, tables or other hard surfaces for the girls to build paper clip towers, a stopwatch, and a tape measure.

Preparation: place a box of paper clips on different tables or hard surfaces.

1. *Divide the girls into groups of five to ten and direct them to a table that's been prepared for them.*
2. *At your signal they have seven minutes to build a tower only using the paper clips that have been provided. They may bend, clip, or stack the paper clips. The team that builds the highest tower — which must be able to stand without assistance— wins!*

When time is up and the winners are appreciated with applause, ask the girls to take one paper clip with them, and return to their seats.

Say . . . In Genesis 11 we learn about a tall tower. The people of Babel said, *“Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth”* (verse 4).

Their goal was to build a tower to the heavens, and yet in the very next verse we learn that God had to come down to see it. Isn't God's humor funny and ironic? Although God is everywhere, the Bible says — just to make sure we get the point that this tower is puny — that the LORD came down to see the

tower (verse 5).

What He saw was disobedience and pride, and it displeased Him. He confused the people's language so they couldn't understand each other. The building stopped and the people scattered.

The people of Babel loved human praise. They loved it when people said they were great, wonderful, and cool. They loved people pointing to their tower and making much of what they were doing. They loved to make much of themselves instead of making much of God. Their love for being praised is called pride.

All of us struggle with that ugly sin called pride, don't we? Some of us have serious troubles with pride, some of us less, but all of us suffer from it.

Towers have much to teach us. Do you have a tower of pride standing tall in your life? What things in your life are you proud about? What successes or things in your life do you boast about? Do you look down on people who aren't just like you?

God despised pride in the days of Genesis and He despises it yet today. In order to walk humbly with God, we need to tear down the towers of pride and make much of God instead of much of ourselves.

Please hold your paper clip tightly in your hands as we pray. . . .

Prayer: Heavenly Father, You alone are worthy to be worshipped and praised. Please forgive us when we build towers of pride in our lives, putting ourselves first instead of You. Help us to remember that we are Yours, and all that we have and all that we are is due to You alone. We want to make much of You and to serve You in humble obedience. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Less is More!

Scripture: Mark 8:35-36

You will need: a bowl of M&M's®, Skittles®, or another small desirable snack and a small paper cup for each girl.

Preparation: measure out the candy into a large bowl making sure that if each girl makes the choice to fill her cup half full or less, there will be enough for everyone. If the girls fill their cups over half full, the object lesson will be more effective!

1. *Distribute a paper cup to everyone.*
2. *Have the girls form a line with the first person standing next*

to the bowl.

3. *One by one invite the girls to fill their paper cup as full as they want to and sit down, but they may not eat their snack until you give the signal! Be sure to encourage them to take as MUCH as they want!*

Once the girls are sitting down, ask the people that were at the front of the line . . .

How many snacks did you get?

Did you get all that you wanted?

Ask the people that were at the back of the line . . .

How many snacks did you get?

Did you get all that you wanted? *They will probably say, "None" or "Not as much as we would have liked."*

Say . . . Before you eat your candy, there's an important lesson we can learn from the girls at the front of the line getting all the candy they wanted and the girls at the back of the line receiving very little or none at all.

The Bible has made it very clear that we are to share our food with the hungry, that we are to provide the homeless with shelter, and the naked with clothes. We are to help the oppressed, orphans, widows, and the poor.

Often the first way that we think of to help others is to give of our time, money, and resources. This is good and right!

There is another way to help these injustices that we may have neglected or ignored. The second way is not by giving, but by using less! If we determine to use less water, or less electricity, there will be more available to other people! If your family would choose to save electricity by shutting off the lights when no one is in the room, using a clothesline instead of a dryer, or using a bicycle instead of car whenever that is possible, you would save resources for the next generation AND have more money to send to those who really need it.

Jesus said in Mark 8:35-36 (NLT), *If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your soul? Anything that we give up in this life cannot compare to what we gain in Jesus Christ!*

Are you willing to make some sacrifices, living on less so others can have more? Let's pray together and then I'll give you your final candy instructions!

Prayer: Father God, You made this world and said that it was good. We confess that there have been times when we've selfishly hoarded Your goodness and resources, leaving less for other people and future generations. Please forgive us. Help us to lose our desire for the things of this world and find our gain in Jesus alone. In His name we pray, Amen.

Let's make the first step toward living on less so others can have more with the way we distribute the candy. I'd like each of you to form a line again. If each of you has a half of cup of candy or less, there will be enough for everyone. As you walk by the bowl, either put some candy back in the bowl or put some in your cup so that you have about half a cup.

When everyone has half a cup of candy, give the signal to eat and enjoy!

Are You Willing?

Scripture: Matthew 8:2-3

You will need: no supplies.

Preparation: none.

Listen carefully to the story about a leper contained in two short verses from the Bible: *A man with leprosy came and knelt before him [Jesus] and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy (Matthew 8:2-3).*

The leper knew that Jesus could heal him; he just needed to know if Jesus was willing! Was Jesus willing to touch him even though his skin was covered with a dreadful disease? Was Jesus willing to come near someone who was considered an outcast by the rest of the community? Was Jesus willing to love the least of these?

Jesus answered, "I am willing!" Jesus came near, touched, healed, and loved the leper.

Are you and I willing to reach out in compassion and love like Jesus?

In a physical, thoughtful way, let's pray to Jesus asking Him to make us willing. Please stand in a circle.

Please extend your hands . . . Father God, please make our hands willing to reach out to those who are sick, sad, and difficult to love.

Please point to your feet . . . Please make our feet willing to take the extra steps to meet with the lonely, deliver food to the hungry, and to visit an elderly neighbor.

Please point to your head . . . Please make our minds willing to capture every thought

Please point to your heart . . . and make it obedient to You. Please open our hearts wide to be willing to befriend the outcast, to love the disagreeable, and to forgive those who have hurt us.

Please join hands . . . Please make us willing to walk the Micah Road together, acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

United in Love

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-3

You will need: a key ring loop.

Preparation: none.

Hold up the key ring loop and say . . . Wedding rings are a symbol of the love between a husband and wife. Rings remind us of love! Today (tonight) we're going to let this key ring loop serve as a reminder of what it means to share the love of Jesus with others. Let's play and then we'll talk it up!

Please stand in a circle and join hands. The goal is to pass this ring around the circle without letting go of your hands. Pass the ring from ring finger to ring finger, remembering that the key ring is a symbol of Jesus' love.

When girls have successfully passed the key ring around the circle, ask them to sit down where they are and ask . . .

What were some of the challenges of passing this ring around the circle? *Answers may include that it was difficult, awkward, slow, etc.*

How true! When we share the love of Jesus with others it may be difficult, awkward, and slow. Sometimes there are obstacles in our way like the time it takes to show Jesus' love to others or the way people react to the message of Jesus' love. People don't necessarily respond in the ways we expect. Sharing Jesus' love with others may not be easy, but it is necessary!

In Philippians 2:1-3, Paul teaches us how we can imitate Jesus' humility and love. Paul writes, *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

Like our circle and this key ring loop we need to be united in love and one in spirit and in purpose in how we share Jesus' love with others. We love best when we love humbly and unselfishly. When we unite in love it's a message to the world that God is a God of love.

Ask the girls to join hands for the prayer below or girls can pray sentence prayers, "popcorn" style. . .

Prayer: Dear Abba Father, thank you for Your love for us and for the world. Please bond us together in love and unite us in spirit and purpose to share Your love with the world. Help us to put aside selfish ambition and pride and love others in such a way that we point them to You. Help us to follow Jesus' example of perfect love and humility. In His name we pray, Amen.

Be Compassionate – Love Like Jesus

Scripture: John 13:34-35

You will need: a paper towel or bathroom tissue tube for half of the girls.

Preparation: none.

1. *Divide the girls into pairs.*
2. *Distribute one paper towel or bathroom tissue tube to each pair.*
3. *Instruct them to take turns looking through the tube and describing their partner based only on what they can see. For example: Angie has one ear, lots of hair, and no eyes or mouth.*

When girls are finished describing one another, say . . . Do you think there's more to your partner than what you can see through a small tube? *Listen to responses.* Yes, of course there is! There's so much more to your partner – inside and out – than you can see through a one-inch opening.

Sometimes we judge other people as if we were looking through a one-inch opening. This is called prejudice! We only see a very, very small part of them and make broad statements like, "All people of this race are . . ." or "All people who live in that neighborhood are . . ." or "All kids that go to that school are . . ." These kind of statements and ways of thinking are wrong.

Jesus gave us this command in John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus said love other people the way that I love you! Jesus compassionately loves people of all races and all nations. He ate with and loved the poor, the outcasts, the sick, and the lonely. Jesus reached out to the people that others had rejected. He never judged a person by his or her skin color or neighborhood. He loved everyone.

Do you love like Jesus loves? Let's ask Him in prayer to give us bigger hearts for all people.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for the command and the example that You gave us for how we are to love others. We admit that we often fail to love people like You do. Please forgive us. Help us to reach out and love all people. Grow bigger hearts within us that cause us to love like You love. Thank you for Your love for each one of us and for all people. In Your name, Amen.

Walk the Narrow Road

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-14

You will need: two long strips of butcher paper, a wide strip (about five feet) and a narrow strip (about one foot), and markers.

Preparation: lay the two long strips of butcher paper down in front of the girls (they're supposed to be roads). On the wide road write these words: selfishness, it's all about me, laziness, greed, pride, hate, lies, stealing, gossip, envy, jealousy, bullying, etc. On the narrow road write these words: love, humility, service, generosity, build others up, truth, giving, gentleness, purity, kindness, patience, justice, etc.

Say . . . Listen carefully to these verses from Matthew and then I'll tell you what I thought this passage meant the first time I heard it.

Matthew 7:13-14, "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*"

When I was a young girl I heard our pastor read these two verses and I made a mental note to myself. When I die, there will be two roads. One will be really, really wide and one will be very narrow. I need to make sure I open the narrow gate and walk the narrow road or I won't live with Jesus. For a long time I thought that was the message of the roads!

I was wrong. Choosing to walk the narrow road or the wide road doesn't happen after we die, it happens today! I also discovered that the roads are not physical roads like we drive our cars on, but they are roads of choices that we make each day.

There are two roads in front of us. Could I please have a volunteer come forward and read the words on the wide road? *When volunteer finishes reading the words, thank her and say . . .* Walking this road and making these choices is easy and so many people are doing it. The Bible tells us where the road leads. It leads to destruction, waste, and ruin.

Could I please have a volunteer come forward to read the words on the narrow road? *When volunteer finishes reading the words, thank her and say . . .* Not many people find the narrow road that Jesus wants us to walk. It's a road that leads to Jesus today and forever when we live with Him in Heaven.

What road best describes the Micah Road? *Listen to responses.* You're right! The Micah Road is narrow and I'm so thankful that each one of you is walking it today. Let's all stand on the narrow road together while we pray.

Prayer: Father God, You have clearly marked in the Bible the road for us to walk, Your map for our lives. Forgive us when we choose the wide road of pride, hatred, and greed. Help us to walk the way You have instructed us to walk. Help each girl here today to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Yes, He Can!

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:5-8

You will need: a toy train, a shoebox decorated like a train car, a small piece of paper and a pencil for each girl.

Preparation: distribute the pencils and paper to the girls. Place the toy train in front of the group as a visual, along with the shoebox decorated like a train car.

Say . . . How many of you have heard the story, *The Little Engine That Could?* Listen to responses. The story tells about a little train that was chug, chugging, puff, puffing, and happily rumbling over the train tracks. During the story the little engine is asked to pull a long train over a high mountain. That was a huge job that other larger engines turned down. The Little Engine That Could agrees to try. He chugs to the motto *I-think-I-can, I-think-I-can*, and makes his way over the mountain!

How do you respond to big requests that you're unsure you can do? Listen to how a man in the Bible named Jeremiah responded when God said that he was going to be a prophet to the nations.

Jeremiah 1:5-8, [God said to Jeremiah] *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*

"Ah, Sovereign LORD," [Jeremiah] said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."

But the LORD said to [Jeremiah], "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.

Jeremiah responded with excuses and doubts. He said, "I'm only a kid!" Have you ever responded that way?

Think about some of the excuses or doubts that you have about walking the Micah Road. Maybe you think you're not smart enough or that you're too young. Maybe you think you're not creative enough or that you don't know enough about Jesus to serve Him well.

Please write your doubt or excuse on your slip of paper and fold it up. When you're finished writing, you can put it in our train car. *When everyone is finished writing and all the slips are in the train car, hold up the box and say . . .*

When Jeremiah said he was too young to serve God, God told him not to be afraid because He was with Jeremiah. I want you to think about what you wrote and put in this boxcar. God's response is the same for you. God says to each one of you, "Do not be afraid. I am with you and I will help you."

It's not a matter of positive thinking like the little engine that willed himself up on the mountain. You can do it because Jesus will do it in you and through you. As you walk the Micah Road let your chugging motto be, "I know God can, I know God can, I know God can . . ." Choo! Choo!

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, when we think about what it takes to walk the Micah Road, we sometimes come up with excuses for all the reasons that we can't do this walk. Please forgive us. Thank you for the reminder in Your Word that we should not be afraid because You are with us, You will strengthen us and help us. We know we can walk this road in and through You. In Jesus' name, Amen.